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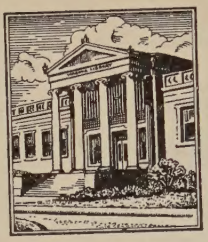
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SERMONS

BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER,

PLYMOUTH CHURCH, BROOKLYN.

SELECTED FROM PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED DISCOURSES,
AND REVISED BY THEIR AUTHOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

For nearly ten years past, one or both of the sermons delivered every Sunday in Plymouth Church have been published, week by week, in the religious and secular newspapers, until now many hundreds have been given to the public. From this great number the Rev. Lyman Abbott, at my request, and acting in connection with me, has selected the sermons contained in these volumes, and undertaken the editorial care of them through the press.

Besides those which have already been printed, a number have been taken down specially for these volumes which have not been printed before in any authorized manner.

These sermons were prepared, week by week, for the wants of my congregation. They are, therefore, not only in theory practical sermons, but they have been drafted from the actual field of work. Had they been originally prepared for the press, I know not what difference that would have made in form and style. But, in fact, they are so many arrows shot in the day of battle, and every one of them with a real and definite aim.

I have never read one of my sermons after it was printed that I did not burn to reconstruct and improve it. I have never attempted to rewrite one of them that I did not find that it would lose in freedom and directness more than it gained in literary excellence. In preparing them for these volumes, therefore, with one or two exceptions, I aban-

doned all idea of reconstruction, and have removed only the more obvious faults where they did not inhere in the very structure of the discourse, and have, in the main, left them as they were originally delivered.

It has been my habit to prepare the matter of my discourses, to arrange carefully the plan in copious written notes, but beyond that to rely wholly on the inspiration of their delivery for their literary clothing and for most of the illustrations.

In making a selection among so many, those discourses have been chosen which would, as far as possible, give a correct view of the range of subjects which I am accustomed to employ in my ministry. An important exception is made in regard to the application of Christian truth to public questions of the day. These it has been thought best to reserve, and, should they ever be republished, to place them in a volume by themselves.

I am indebted for the reports of my sermons for many years to the skill and fidelity of T. J. Ellinwood.

I have always been glad that I chose the ministry of the Gospel of Christ as the business of my life. My work has been a joy to me all the way. I can not conceive of another profession in which the noble enjoyments are so many and the drawbacks so few. If, when I am too old to labor, these sermons shall still be read, it will complete my satisfaction, and extend my joy and reward down to the very end of my life.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

Brooklyn, January, 1868.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE friends of Mr. Beecher have long desired some collection of his sermons such as would present an authoritative statement of the views which he has maintained, and the methods which he has employed for their presentation. Yielding to this desire, often and urgently repeated, Mr. Beecher has placed in my hands over five hundred sermons, published and unpublished, from which, after careful examination, and in constant consultation with him and some personal friends to whom he referred me, the sermons comprising these volumes have been selected. To take so little from so much that is every way worthy of permanent preservation has been a task of rare difficulty. If any reader, therefore, is inclined to complain of the omission of special sermons which were deserving of insertion, I shall heartily concur in his regrets. The limits of space have compelled me to omit more that ought to be preserved than it was possible to insert.

There is, perhaps, no man of ancient or modern times whose preaching is so diverse in manner as that of Mr. Beecher—a fact which partly accounts for his perpetual freshness and his permanent success. The diversity of method and unity of truth, which he combines in a rare degree, I have endeavored to illustrate in these volumes. The reader will here find, therefore, not only a presentation of his theological system, as in the sermon on The Importance of Correct Belief, and his doctrinal views on special subjects, as in the sermons on the Incarnation and the Divinity of Christ, but also sermons addressed to modern skepticism, as The Decadence of Christianity; sermons of practical ethics, as Love the Essence of Religion; of personal appeal, as What will you do with Christ? of description, as Spring-time in Nature and in Experience; of personal experience, as The Walk to Emmaus; sermons addressed to the Church and the clergy, as Fishers of Men, and the two on "Jesus Christ and Him crucified;" and sermons that are poems in prose, as The Sepulchre in the Garden. In short, the sermons have been selected in the spirit in which they

were preached, with reference not so much to the demands of theological scholarship as to the wants of the popular heart.

The whole selection has been made under the supervision of Mr. Beecher. Each sermon has been carefully revised by him, and several have been rewritten in whole or in part. The collection may be accepted, therefore, as an authoritative presentation of his views and teachings, so far as its compass permits, the only one before the public which really is so.

These pages afford no fitting place for an analysis or a eulogy of Mr. Beecher, his tenets, or his pulpit methods. But these discourses of his have been thus collected by one who, personally grateful to him, under God, for much in his own spiritual experience, believes that Mr. Beecher needs no other defense from his assailants, no other commendation to the sincere and unbiased friends of Christian truth, than a faithful portraiture of his customary teachings for the past quarter of a century.

LYMAN ABBOTT.

New-England Church, New York City,
January, 1868.

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I.

Thirteen Years in the Gospel Ministry:

A Sermon of

Ministerial Experience.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sunday evening, January 8th, 1860, at the Commencement of the thirteenth Year of Mr. Beecher's Settlement over the Church as its Pastor.

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Thirteen Years in the Gospel Ministry:

A SERMON OF

Ministerial Experience.

"For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."—1 Cor., ii., 2–5.

From this passage we are perpetually worried with false interpretations of duty. A minister's business is said to be to preach nothing but Christ; that is, to preach upon no other topic. But if we were looking for a text from which to advocate a wider range of preaching, and one more in sympathy with the every-day wants and experiences of men, we should select this, in connection with the rest of the epistle; for there seems to have been scarcely a subject in civil society, or in social life, which had any direct or indirect influence upon man, that is not handled in the Corinthian letters of the apostle.

For in this passage the apostle discloses the nature of that *power* by which he hoped to affect men in his journey to Corinth; not at all the *topics* which he meant to speak about. The topics upon which he meant to speak were in the minds and lives of men. The power which he meant to exert upon men in the discussion of these topics was Christ

—Christ crucified—the life, and death, and teaching of Christ. No matter what topic he spoke about, he intended to discuss it from a heart perfectly inspired by Christ; from the stand-point of the truths revealed by Christ. He determined that every topic which he touched upon should be Christianly discussed.

Corinth was a city, I need not say, that for splendor, wealth, pleasure, intelligence, luxury, and the utmost license, stood second to none in the age in which Paul lived. It was a grand thoroughfare. It was the central point between Greece and Asia on the east, and Rome, and Italy, and the whole Western world in the other direction. Streams of men, actuated by motives of pleasure, or business, or curiosity, were constantly passing both ways, tarrying for a time at this central point, which may therefore be said to have been cosmopolitan.

The entrance into Corinth of one more Jew, alone, without any personal appearance of distinction; without any circumstances of attraction; without heralds; without the sympathy of even his own countrymen—for he had receded from the Jewish faith, or rather had fulfilled it in Christ, and acceded to it in his spiritual teaching; wholly opposed to the reigning religion of Corinth; without wealth; without any one element of human power; a poor foreigner, and a mechanic at that—for he sustained himself by manufacturing tent-cloth and fashioning tents; neither eloquent, nor, as we should judge from many circumstances recited in his own epistles, even fluent—the entrance of such a man into Corinth was seemingly a matter of very little consequence. How insignificant that history to this old magnificent city—the incoming of one small man, dusty from travel on foot, putting up at the house of a poor man, and beginning to teach doctrines entirely at variance with all the religions of Jews and Gentiles! And yet Paul's entrance proved to be the most memorable event that ever occurred in the history of Corinth!

Entering thus, and proposing to himself the revolution of Corinth, how should he produce any impression? He must needs have thought of that as he neared the city. He doubtless said to himself, How shall I gain the ear and heart, how shall I influence the lives of this great people? Many ways, it may be presumed, presented themselves to his mind. He could not but have perceived — for he had already traveled in Grecian cities — that there was an element of influence very much in vogue, by which men gathered to themselves a great train of followers, great personal influence, great wealth, and great consideration. It was this element that he called "excellency of speech" — the attractions and persuasions of an orator who wins men's admiration by his exquisite periods and dainty devices of language, who makes thought, and feeling, and utterance but a varied strain of music. But such an influence as this, although normal in certain relations, would not strike deep enough to do the work which he desired to accomplish; for it was not admiration for himself, but character in his hearers, that he sought. Eloquence had no power to produce that. It might dazzle, it might for the moment excite and give pleasure, but it would produce no lasting effect; for mere eloquence is like the light of shavings, which burn with a sudden flash, blazing for an instant, and then going out, without leaving either coals or heat behind.

There were thousands every day, in the various schools of philosophy, who yielded themselves to the attractive displays of the sophists. The higher thinkers, such as Socrates and Plato, and their schools, had died out, and there was a degenerate set called sophists, who had substituted ingenious casuistries and fine word-reasoning for moral thinking. But, although these philosophies had some power, and these teachers had in their schools many disciples, and exercised a certain public influence, they could not do what Paul desired to do—namely, reform the life and save the souls of men. He alludes to them in the most explicit terms in the first chapter of this epistle:

"After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign"—the intervention of the divine power in such a way as to be manifest to the senses—"and the Greeks seek after wisdom"—philosophy. "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

That was the thing that he was seeking—the salvation of men; and he was asking himself, "Where shall there be found a power that is adequate to cope with men's dispositions; that shall reach down to the very centre of feeling; that shall take hold of men's wills; that shall permanently change the currents of men's feelings; that shall be more to men than the sight of their eyes or the solicitation of their senses? Here are men thralled in wealth, and periled by ten thousand potent influences; where shall I find a power that can be successfully brought into antagonism with these things that are binding men in the bundles of destruction?" He declares that it shall be found in Christ crucified, in Christ as the manifestation of God.

This, therefore, must be the source and secret of all power for the regeneration of men as individuals, and of human society. It is Christ faithfully preached and rightly understood that has power to do for this world what it needs to have done.

I desire, then, to affirm this grand fact, that the truths revealed in the life and teachings of Christ are of sovereign power, and are the most influential upon the motives and the conduct of human life. They go to the very root of moral consciousness. They reveal human character by applying to it a standard higher than any that was ever before applied to it. They define and mark the nature of sin in human conduct. They establish obligations upon immutable grounds, leaving them not to the shifting ingenuity of

human reason, but imposing them according to divine principles. They reveal the infinite reach of moral conduct and its eternal consequences. Thus they reveal to man the nature of himself, the nature of the government under which he lives, the nature of God, and the nature of immortality.

These truths of Christ carry with them, in signal and eminent degree, the Spirit of God, which gives them an energy and an efficacy that does not belong to any ordinary and natural truths. There is a power in all truth, because of the natural adaptation between a thing believed and the faculty which receives it. But the truths of Christ carry with them a special divine illumination and divine power, which no other truths do.

The secret of all real advance in this world, since the days of Christ, has been the truths of Christ preached in their simplicity, and set home by the Spirit of God upon the conscience and upon the heart. Organizations, and systems, and forms of faith and modes of reasoning — these, and various other collateral influences, have done something; but, after all, the real advance in this world during the last eighteen hundred years has been wrought by the blessing of God's Spirit upon the preaching of Christ, the manifestation of God and the Savior of mankind.

Nor has the truth of Christ yet lost its power. The eternal youth of God belongs to this most precious truth. It can never grow old; it can never grow feeble. And to-day, just as much as at the Pentecost, it has a direct and efficacious relation to the conscience, the character, and the life of man. To-day, Christ, when faithfully preached, will be the wisdom of God and the power of God, and will be for the salvation of every man that believes. And to-day, after all the civilization that has issued from the bosom of Christianity, after all the advances that have been made in social life and civil affairs, to-day, just as much as when Christ came, men need a Savior, an illuminator, a guide, a God revealed and manifested in the flesh.

All mere efforts of religious worship, appealing to the sentiment of veneration; all mere philosophic teaching, appealing to the instructed reason; all mere philanthropism, however good, if it has no other strength than that of the natural sentiment of benevolence; all mere justice, however excellent, if it stands only in human ideas, will be found to grow dull and to wane in force. They never can carry that electric, enthusiastic impulse which is necessary to the propagation and permanence of any influence in the community and the world. Nothing, indeed, will endure, nothing will have endless power equal to the emergencies of human life, but that which brings the very God before the soul, and sets it home with the power of God upon the understanding, and the conscience, and the heart of men.

And the pulpit in our day will be powerful in the degree in which Christ is the power of its ministrations. There is no power to arouse men, no power to instruct them, no power to correct their lives, no power to sanctify their hearts, in any eminent degree, except the power that is in Christ Jesus. Instead of losing confidence in Christ as the wisdom of God and the power of God for salvation, by the side of pretentious systems and revelations, the more I look into these new discoveries the more do I feel the indispensable need there is of this wisdom and power, for human society and for individuals. As much as ever it is needed to inspire men to lives of heroism; to console them under their troubles and afflictions; to give them strength to carry their burdens; to give them power, in the midst of all the complications of human life—right and wrong, good and evil, expectations and disappointments, hopes and fears—to lift themselves up superior to their circumstances, so that they will be neither puffed up by prosperity nor cast down by adversity, and so that they will be content with either extreme. I know of no other influence that can do this beside the living truth of the living Christ, the Redeemer of men from their sins.

I am now laboring among you, my dear people, in the thir-

teenth year of my ministry. I have endeavored to make Christ both the theme and the secret of power in my preaching to you. And I desire to-night, with your permission, to speak somewhat of myself and my own preaching. It would seem proper, at the beginning of another year, that one should make a declaration of faith. If there is any time when one may be indulged, without an imputation of vanity, in speaking of himself, it is when a pastor, for purposes of future co-operation and good understanding among the people of his charge, tells, as Paul told in writing to the Corinthians, what have been the secret thoughts that have animated his procedure among them.

Let me say, then, that I have looked upon men as, invariably and without any exception, so spiritually dead, so sinful and carnal, as to need a change of heart wrought by divine power. I believe that men universally, just as much where the Gospel is preached as where it never has been heard, are in a state which, if they are not redeemed from it by God's Spirit, will be fatal to them. I believe there is a character to be built up by the truths of Christ, and by the influence of God's Spirit, in men. The conversion of men from their sins, and their edification in the Christian life, therefore, I have proposed to myself as the very aim of my ministry. To that I have given the burden of my life among you. Although, that I might not weary you with endless repetitions, that I might draw the attention of the young, that I might adapt my teaching to the ever-varying disposition of this great congregation, I have sought to come at these substantial things from many different sides—from the side of fact, of sympathy, of reason, of imagination—yet the target at which I have aimed has been the redemption of men from their sins, and their salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Now there is more in this than the mere general statement. When I say that I have proposed to myself the salvation of men, I mean that I have had—as I do still have—a living and distinct thought, in my preaching, of men, not merely in

masses, but as individuals. There is a remote way of affecting men. A minister may say, "I propose to preach a system of theology, which, although no one sermon may seem to have any particular relation to any one, and although I may think of no one while speaking, will influence men little by little, and so do them good." I hope such preaching will do those good who sit under it. And some good may result from that remote way of presenting the truth; but it is a way which has not been consistent with my ideas of preaching, and which I have not, therefore, adopted. I have felt as though preaching was a direct work, bringing living thought and soul immediately in connection with men's thoughts and souls.

My aim among you, then, has been to preach directly to men, rousing them to a sense of their sinful state, and bringing them into Christian dispositions. And to this end it has been a part of my purpose to study you, as well as my Bible; to make myself acquainted with your wants, your habits, your occupations, and your feelings; to bring myself into commerce with human nature, and into sympathy with every possible phase of men's lives, that I might understand you, and know how to preach a truth that would reach the case of every individual. I have sought, as far as I knew how, to go around and touch human nature on every single side, and always with one object in view, namely, the redemption of men, and their justification before God.

I have attempted to gain this by the presentation of Christ in all his life and all his teachings. I have sought, first—I would that I had met with better success—to be myself under the full power of Christ, that I might speak with the unction that belongs to experience. Brethren, I count this the weakest place in my ministry. I should have been a better minister if I had been a better man. I have never attempted to preach God that I have not felt the leanness of my own soul. I have never attempted to set before you the glory of Christ that I have not felt how little of Christ there

was in me; for no man can preach any more of Christ than he has in him. And there has been my conscious weakness. I have felt that I was not enough like my Master to preach him successfully. But I can say that I never attempted to preach any thing which I did not believe as I do my own existence. I have most scrupulously let alone every thing that did not seem to me to be true. I have never sought to mislead you in any degree, that I might stand well with my own brethren. I have sought you, and the glory of God in you, by the most faithful teaching of Christ that I knew how to utter. And I have sought to have the spirit of Christ as a preparation for this work.

I have set this end before me with a determination to use any and all proper means that experience has shown would affect the human soul, and with a determination to reject, at all hazards, whatever things seemed to me to stand in the way of man's good. I have studiously avoided entering into any such affiliations with ecclesiastical organizations as should make me a preacher in sympathy with them rather than in sympathy with you. I have zealously watched the things which threatened to take away from me the power of Christ as my instrument, and the salvation of men as my end, in the ministry.

It has pleased God to give us many powerful revivals of religion, and hundreds have been converted, and the Word of God in your midst has been a living word. Blessed be his name, the Spirit of God has not forsaken the old appointed channels, and the truth of God as in Christ Jesus has been in your midst. What a work has the power of God wrought among you! How many that now would have been dead, and going down to perdition, have been saved by the truth of Christ! How many that, blindfold, were getting farther and farther into the mazes of infidelity, have been brought in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ! Oh that I could read the histories which I see, and express the thoughts of my soul, as I stand looking, sometimes, in those moments of in-

spiration that God gives men, when they see all things at a glance! There is here a history. How voluminous it is, running back through many years! Before me lies a mighty volume, every page of which is covered with strange histories. I look into this book of living salvation, and see what the Gospel has been to you through the instrumentality of my ministry in your midst. But you are not all. We have great singings in heaven. And if God needs angels to convert you, and minister to you, to make you heirs of salvation, they that have gone up are enough, methinks, to take care of you. We have our double in heaven, each one of us.

In the thirteen years of our tarrying together, what a history has been developed for our eternity, when we have time to look back, and when we are able to trace all the secret affiliations, and causes, and influences which have had to do with our destiny! And, brethren, you and I, of all others, should not forget to bear witness, day by day, and with emphasis, that God has not forgotten to be gracious to us, that he has not left his word without a witness in our midst, and that he has made the preaching of the truth of Christ here the means of salvation and the means of sanctification.

I have allied my life, as I have said, to the welfare of living men, and I have continually endeavored to make the work of my ministry the production of both remote and immediate effects upon the life and character of men. Leaving to others the liberty of employing such means as were rational and proper to them, I have adopted such as belong to me. No man can preach the truth in a perfect form, for there is no man that is more than a fragment of a man. The largest, and richest, and roundest, are all fragmentary. And I think that no person who is deeply imbued with the spirit of Christ can help sympathizing with the apostle when he says, in substance, "Now we see partially, and teach partially. When that which is perfect is come, in heaven, then that which is in part shall be done away; and not till then." No man, however wise he may think himself, is wise, for no man is more

than a partialist. And the wisdom of every man is to accept himself as he is, and say, "I can not do every thing. God did not mean me to be a universal machine to make universal products, but a limited machine to do particular things."

It seems to me that I have understood what God meant in respect to myself; that he has given me strength, and courage, and hopefulness, that I might affect men at once. I have proposed to myself nothing higher than that. I have accepted my own disposition and my own power. I know they are not to be compared with that which I can think of, or that which I see in other men, or that which I read of in the history of other days; but when I see others who are broader, and stronger, and wider than I am, I comfort myself with this thought: "It is all the same in heaven. I will not work for the sake of being a large man; I will work for Christ, and for the love I have of my work; and as to the reward, I will take that when I get through—I will take that in heaven."

I think that if any body wants to find saintship, he had better look some where else than in the Church. It will do for children to worship father and mother, but any other man-worship I do not believe in. Many of you have lived a better life than I have; but I can say that I have in sincerity and truthfulness endeavored to inspire you with the highest thoughts and the most ennobling aspirations, and to bring your souls under the direct influence of the Lord Jesus Christ, for his glory and your salvation. So far I have been faithful. I have been weak and imperfect, but to this great purpose of my life I have adhered.

If at any time I have seemed to you or to others to speak with undue severity of men, or churches, or orders of men, or institutions, it has never been from any personal bitterness. I do not think I feel personal bitterness toward any man.

Nor has it ever been from any partisan zeal. I have refused to ally myself to any party any farther than to take

sides with all good men. But my zeal for the welfare of men, as being so dear to Christ that his love for them is represented only in the extreme act of dying, my earnestness that nothing should interpose between God's purposes and men's good, my opposition to any thing that tends to separate mankind from Christ, have led me to indulge in denunciations at times.

I think I would give my own life, if called to do so, for the cause of Christ and the welfare of men. Why, then, should I hesitate to denounce any thing that is opposed to the cause of Christ? Why should I hesitate to inveigh against any thing, however sacred it may be to others, which is injurious to the welfare of men? I will not fear to condemn any organization, or any institution, that seems to me to stand in the way of God's glory or man's redemption. It is not, as I said, personal bitterness that leads me to use severity. It is *for* men, and not *against* men, that I am inflamed and aroused. And my indignation is strong just in proportion as those for whom it is called out are weak and unable to defend themselves.

I can not forget the answer which Christ, who had been rejected by all the organizations of his day, and who was laboring among the poor, made to the disciples of John that were sent to ask him if he was the Messiah. He said, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised"—then one step beyond that—"to the poor the Gospel is preached," as if this were the most significant and the most unquestionable indication, in the view of that age, that he was God upon earth.

And just in proportion as men are ignorant, and outcast, and despised, and oppressed, my soul goes out for them, without regard to color, or nationality, or any thing except the fact that they are children of God and heirs of immortality.

Bear me witness whether this is not the right side for a Christian minister to take. Would you want a Gospel that

made ministers to be only friends and parasites of those in power? Would you respect a teacher who was always seeing which way the currents of respectability went, and avoiding all doctrines except those which run safely along in those currents? Are they not true ministers of the Gospel who count not their life dear, who fear not to advocate what is right, though it be unpopular, and who speak in behalf of the weak, the ignorant, and the sinful?

In this work, then, of the salvation of men, and their edification in the Christian life, I have sought the utmost liberty of this pulpit in your midst. I revere the Sabbath day; I love the Church; I have no objection to church organizations, and believe they must exist for unknown centuries yet. But, on the other hand, I have counted every thing in this world as a mere instrument to be used for the benefit of the human soul. There is not a thing, therefore, that I can make influential on the understanding, the affections, and the conscience, that is not good enough to use on Sunday. The use sanctifies the instrument under such circumstances.

Many men seem to feel — and I am bound not to ridicule their convictions—that the Sabbath day is so sacred, in and of itself, that there are topics which, though they may properly be discussed in the newspapers, and talked of on week-days, ought not to be preached about on Sunday in the church and from the pulpit. But I say that the soul is of more value than the Sabbath, the Church, the pulpit, or any thing else on earth. "The Sabbath was made for man"— that is, to be his servant —"and not man for the Sabbath." The Bible was made for man, the Church was made for man, the pulpit was made for man; and I have a right to bring, on the Sabbath day, into this church, and on this platform, any instrument that God may place within my reach which I can make contribute to the awakening of men and their salvation.

Some persons think it is a great sin to speak of secular events in the pulpit on Sunday. What if secular events can

be so treated of on the Sabbath as to touch men's hearts, and bring them under the power of Christ's Gospel? Is the day too sacred to be employed in doing good? Is not this notion about the sanctity of the Sabbath a superstition? Is it not the very thing which Christ rebuked when he said, "You will pull an ox or an ass out of a pit on the Sabbath day, and yet you find fault with me for making a man whole on the Sabbath day?"

In the matter of preaching on the Sabbath day, I have taken the liberty to touch the human soul without any care whatever, except to see to it that the touch has been efficient. There is not a faculty of the human soul that I have not a right to ply with the great truths of the Gospel for the redemption of that soul. I have as much right to touch your imagination as your reason, or any other faculty of your mind. The minister of God has *carte blanche* liberty to touch men's mirthfulness even, so far as by so doing he can help them toward the right and away from the wrong. I regard this superstitious, unsmiling Christianity as a relic of the old Vandal times.

I have never sought to make you laugh for the sake of merriment. I should have a loathing contempt of myself if I had made it a part of my business to peddle witticisms from the pulpit. But when, in the eager rush of thought, an opportunity for making a bright stroke has presented itself, I have struck, and struck boldly, without any care as to whether mirth would be excited in my hearers or not. There is no part of man's nature that is not an open, fair mark.

To those, therefore, who have no sort of objection to the profound sleep of the sanctuary, I must stand as an enigma. As for me, I have no sympathy with sleeping in the sanctuary, whether it be orthodox sleeping or heterodox sleeping. I abhor every thing that looks like apathy or indifference under the preaching of the Gospel. I abhor that state of a man in which he is dead in trespasses and sins; for I am called to be a minister *of* life and *to* life—a minister of feeling and

emotion, that shall wake you from evil, and give you an impulse toward good in every part of your nature.

In respect to doctrines and forms of truth, I have also used my liberty to do God's work upon men in that way in which it seemed to me best that it should be done. I have sought to build up no philosophical system, not because I think there may not be such work done, but because I do not feel called to do it. Whether or not I have erred in judgment, and have sought immediate effects at the expense of remote ones, time will show. I have not sought to cast aspersions upon doctrines; but when I have found doctrines so covered up with rubbish as to work mischief among men, I have not hesitated to tear off the rubbish and reveal their true nature. To me there is no sacredness in forms. To me two things are sacred, and only two: one is the living soul of man, and the other is the living soul of God. To every thing besides I am indifferent, except so far as it may be used with reference to the good of the one and the glory of the other.

I have, I need scarcely say, used the widest liberty in the choice of topics, for I have felt that he who cares for men must regard all the things that influence men. I could not, with my views, have been a faithful preacher if I had forborne to speak upon any subject which had a material bearing upon your welfare. A minister, to be successful, must adapt himself to the wants of the age in which he lives. The work to be done in different ages varies, not in kind, but in specialties, and God raises up men and qualifies them for the work to be done in their own age.

The work of summer is one; but March, and April, and May, and June, and July, and August each have their separate part in the one great harvest of the year. So each age has its particular work in God's harvesting, and every man must adapt himself to the nature and needs of the age in which he lives, or else he can not successfully apply himself to that work.

And in the times in which I have lived, I have not only

sought to preach Christ to you in respect to your personal relations to God and God's claims upon you, but, having read in the New Testament, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," I have attempted to tell you how to obey this command in the family, in society, in your business, in your social relationships, in your civil duties, in all the emergencies that come upon you in life. And I do not apologize for it. I only wish I had done it more faithfully. I have not regarded it as a thing to be excused or even explained. I have spoken about the organization of society; about your social pleasures and amusements; about your relations and duties in the family and in the community. I have brought physiological questions into my preaching whenever I thought they would enable me to throw the least light upon the training of your children and your own training; and I have dealt with those subjects of slavery and liberty which have agitated the whole American community, and attempted to tell you what was the law of the Gospel respecting them.

When I hear men say that they are ordained to preach the Gospel, and that they are consequently not to meddle with public questions which disturb the peace, I always ask myself what Gospel it is that man is ordained to preach, which forbids him to meddle with public questions that disturb peace; for it is explicitly declared that the Gospel of Christ should cause disturbance. It is true that the angel foresaw a time when peace and good-will toward men should reign upon the earth, but that is to be the harvest-period of the world. Christ says, "I came, not to bring first peace, but to bring first the sword. I shall set at variance every man that stands for a moral principle with every man that will not stand for it. Every man that is for purity I shall set at variance with every man that is for impurity. Every man that is for truth I shall set at variance with every man that is against truth. Every man that is for God I shall set at variance with every man that is against God." And if there was

any thing plainly taught by Christ, it was that his Gospel should cause disturbances and revolutions among men. Peace is to come by-and-by. We are to look for peace after victory, but not before battle.

Therefore, when I hear men say that it is the business of a minister of the Gospel to preach truisms and platitudes, and to read old psalms and old epistles, reading them so as not to disturb any body, so as to send his hearers away in a peaceful state of mind — meaning somnolency by peace — when I hear men say this, I say, "Those may be your views, but they do not accord with my conception of the Gospel." If I am true to my convictions, I can never measure my duty as a minister by such views. I am bound however to respect the man who holds them, if he is consistent. When a man believes that the preaching of the Gospel should be a simple enunciation of moral truth, and confines himself to that, I respect *him*, but not his judgment. If he holds that he has no right to preach any thing but the genealogy of Christ, his life and his doctrines, and never wanders in his preaching upon any collateral questions, I say, "That man is consistent, and is to be respected, although he is in an error." But when a minister professes to hold that he has no right to preach any thing but the Gospel, and yet steps aside and preaches historical sermons, geographical sermons, sermons on travels and the like, till it comes to some critical question, the discussion of which would produce excitement, and then throws himself back, and says he is ordained to preach nothing but the Gospel of peace, I both dissent from the man and his doctrines. I do not say that he is a willful deceiver, but I do say that he is under a delusion.

I hold that it is a Christian minister's duty not only to preach the Gospel of the New Testament without reservation, but to apply its truths to every question which relates to the welfare of men; and, as far as I am concerned, I am willing to do this and take the consequences, whatever they may be. Moreover, I hold that in preaching concern-

ing secular things for the good of men I am preaching the Gospel.

Do you not know that a man may be preached to liturgically and doctrinally, and never be touched by the truth, or understand that to which he listens? Suppose I were to preach to you in Hebrew, how much would you understand?

Now, when I preach so that a banker, who has all along been sitting under doctrinal preaching, but has never felt its application to his particular business, feels the next day, when counting his coin, a twinge of conscience, and says, "I wish I could either practice that sermon or forget it," I have preached the Gospel to him in such a way that he has understood it. I have applied it to the sphere of life in which he lives. When the Gospel is preached so that a man feels that it is applied to his own life, he has it translated to him. And it needs to be translated to merchants and lawyers and mechanics and every other class in society, in order that all may receive their portion in due season.

This I have not attempted to do in a spirit of wantonness. In my ministrations among you I have in all things guided myself by this one thought, "What is best for men, and what is most to the honor of Christ?"

In doing this, I have had to a very great extent, I believe, the sympathy, the prayers, and the co-operation of the people of my charge. I could almost say that I know that every Sabbath you watch in prayer for me, that I may be able to utter the truth of Christ with power and with success. I have not been wont to ask much in that regard. I have scarcely felt that any thing was left me to ask. I have felt as though I had beforehand whatever I needed of sympathy and prayerful help.

My Christian brethren, I have just entered upon another year. The results of my teaching may vary, but the principle upon which I teach will be the same. I shall exercise the same liberty of speech. I shall exercise the same liberty of discoursing upon any topics the discussion of which seem to

me to be demanded by the times or the welfare of men. I shall exercise the same zeal. I shall pour out my feelings with just as much freedom. I shall play upon the different faculties of your soul according as I feel moved. By the help of God, I shall labor for the awakening of your children and of yourselves. I shall attempt to make you more just, more honest, more simple, more humble, more conscientious, more affectionate — in every respect more like Christ Jesus. I have already learned that my fidelity to you will not provoke your anger.

God has been gracious to you, and he has been gracious to me in you. It is not often, I think, that in the history of a church twelve years roll around with so few discrepancies and with no breaks. There never has one single question arisen between my people and myself. In this great church, which twelve years ago began with but twenty-five members, which now has not far from fifteen hundred members, and in which the temperance question, the anti-slavery question, questions of policy and various other questions, have been freely discussed, no rupture has occurred. You have dissented from me, and have passed upon me wholesome criticism; but no question has for a single moment divided between you and me. This is a great comfort to me. I thank God for it. May God give us the same mutual confidence, the same peace founded on fidelity, in time to come.

And now, Christian brethren, you are dear to my soul. Your households are dear to me. I can not visit you as a pastor. I am sufficiently advanced to know, if any thing can be indicated by Providence, that I am a preacher, not a pastor. It would be exceedingly pleasant to me to do that other much needed labor. I wish I could, but I can not. I am to be your teacher, and I am to do my work among you and in this community by the power of Christ and him crucified. I bear you in my thoughts and in my prayers, day by day. Your children — those that I know, and those that I do not know, except in the general and remote sense of knowledge

—are very dear to me, and I preach with them in my mind. I am endeavoring to do that by you which I shall not be afraid to face when, before long, you and I shall stand in the presence of Christ. I would rather have one smile from Christ than to have the acclamation of a world. I would rather that he, pointing to you, should say to me, "Well done, good and faithful servant," than to have any thing of which my imagination can conceive. And that is what I am trying to labor for.

I am a man of passions like your own. I am a man proud and fiery; and were it not for the grace of God I should be more so. I am sensitive, quick, full of feeling, and strong in will and purpose, or I never could have done what I was set to do. I shall labor among you hereafter with bodily and mental imperfections, and with limitations—those limitations which come from the want of grace and the want of sufficient piety. I know my own estate and my own weaknesses. I shall labor among you with these weaknesses in time to come. But that grace which has hitherto appointed may yet appoint, so that weaknesses shall be mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds.

Bear then with me, co-operate with me, strive in prayer with me. Let this one thing be before us all—the glory of God in the salvation of men. Perform your part in the family, and help me by your prayers to do my part in the congregation, and all of us will do our parts in the great community in which we dwell. And before long, when that empurpled sun which for most of us has gone past the meridian and is slanting its light upon us, shall sink in the west, we shall have permission, in its flood of glory, to go forth and take hold of the morning of that eternal day which awaits us. And then how sweet will be the recounting of the labors we have performed, and the trials we have borne! In the hope of that day, let us begin the year working for God and for man.

II.

The Love of God.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, October, 1860.

The Love of God.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."—1 John, iv., 9–11.

In every part of the New Testament the distinction is noted between disinterested love, springing from the goodness of the divine nature, and a love which is excited and developed by moral quality in the object of it. It is taught abundantly that God's nature is such that he overflows with love from a divine fullness and richness of heart, and that out of this fullness and richness, without regard to the quality of a man's being, there is a form of love developed from God toward him. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." It is not meant that there is no difference before God between men whose characters are altogether evil and those whose characters are beginning to be good, but only this, that God does not love, as it were, upon an agreement —he does not love simply upon the perception of a cause or of an occasion. There is a fullness of his love which is spontaneous. There is such richness, and depth, and treasure, and abundance of divine feeling, that it tends to flow over immeasurably, unless there is something which absolutely stops it. This is the pulse that beats out from the heart of God through creation. This is the nature and first tendency of the divine disposition.

We perceive among men the difference between natures

whose activities may be excited by outward occasion and those who excite themselves and produce occasion. One man thinks when his mind is played upon so that it is excited to think; but another man finds his mind forever rising into thought, in solitude, in society, in darkness, in light, when he sees, or when he sees not. From his mind there is a perpetual shooting out of these flame-jets of thought. One man has kindness latent within him, but he needs some excitement to kindle it. Such a man's heart, too long clouded, like a sun in a storm-muffled day, shoots through some opening rift, and glows for a period in glory. But there are other natures that are always cloudless. With them a cloud is the exception, shining is the rule. They rise radiant over the horizon; they fill the whole heavens with growing brightness, and all day long they overhang life, pouring down an undiminished flood of brightness and warmth. Some men have a taste and an imagination which is susceptible of being carried up, by constant stimulus, almost to the very creative point, but there are other men that neither need nor wait for provocation. It seems as though imagination was beforehand in them, without special inducements or incitements, and as though it wrought and created from an automatic nature.

Now these are not merely curious shades of difference in men's natures. They are characteristic. It is upon this equatorial line that men are divided into different hemispheres, one hemisphere including geniuses, and the other common men. A man whose nature can be brought into action only by external influences may be a very good man in his way, but never a great man; whereas a man whose nature is forever working of its own accord is destined to be great. He has a creative nature, and is therefore a genius. Those who need plying, rousing, and special outward incitement, are never reckoned as of a higher nature. They may be good, virtuous, refined, honorable, and most estimable; they may be indispensable to the filling up of society; but never will they be reckoned great, nor typical of the highest manhood.

Those, on the other hand, who have spontaneous activity, we put in the rank of genius; for the term *genius*, so much used, and so little understood, is that word by which men signify a mind whose constitution is such that it acts automatically, and out of its own fullness, rather than from any stimulus outside of itself.

Genius is applied to the intellectual part, and not to the disposition. When this high nature is found in the moral sentiments and the affections, we say that men are magnanimous, heroic, saintly, according to the shades of conduct designated. But these last terms point to precisely the same constitution of moral sentiment that the word *genius* does in regard to the intellect.

This view becomes yet more important when we inquire from which side we shall take our ideas of God — for our ideas of God must be learned through ourselves. There is nothing else in the world but ourselves that can teach us what God is. We are made in his image, and it is only so far as that image is developed in and recognizable by us that we can think of or understand him. Is the divine nature one that overflows with thought, feeling, and power, from a need that it has in itself, by reason of its infinite richness, vitality, and activity? or does it act upon special inducement?

There are two notions of God that have more or less prevalence among men. One represents him as a vast organ located in the very centre of heaven, and giving forth majestic sounds when touched, and silent when not. The other represents him as a Being that is never silent, never still, never unheard; one that has such a nature that if there were not an angel in heaven, if there were not a man on earth, if there were nothing in all creation from side to side, there is that in himself that would make him forever overflow with taste, and feeling, and love. The one ascribes to him a nature that is merely susceptible of being called out upon the application of the motive. The other ascribes to him a nature that pours

itself abroad in the earth by reason of its own fullness and richness. It is the latter of these two ideas that I hold, and suppose the Scriptures to teach.

Of all applications of this inquiry, none is more transcendent than this: Does the divine nature imply spontaneous and universal love? Upon this subject Scripture is emphatic. It affirms it not only directly, but by negation. Great wisdom may be required to state this so that men shall not take advantage of it, but more wisdom is required to so state it as not to obscure the clarity and magnificence of the moral view which inheres in this idea of the central nature of God.

Love is God's nature. Not that no other feeling exists in him; not that justice and abhorrence of evil are not co-ordinated with it; not that these do not take part in the divine administration among men; but that the central and peculiarly divine element is love, in which all other feelings live, within whose bounds they all act, to which they are servants, and for which they are messengers and helpers.

The passage selected is one that marks this truth. The love which God has for us did not, does not spring from moral excellence in us; and still less does its depth and breadth answer to the loveableness of our dispositions. No man can ponder for a moment the facts in our case without being obliged to say that God loves men, not so much from the adaptation of human nature and disposition to produce love, as from a divine nature that overflows from the necessity of its own richness and fullness. The reasons must needs be in God, and not in us.

In our text God's love for us is not affirmed to exist because God perceived a spark kindled in us, gradually flaming forth and reaching up toward him. It is not affirmed to exist because our hearts, feebly beating, seemed to knock at the door of his heart, rousing, by their very spent and weak sounds, the compassion of the hospitable divinity.

Do the roots, and grass, and early flowers break forth from winter and send messengers for the sun to come back? or

does the sun come from its far voyaging to overhang the sleeping places of flowers until they feel his presence, and, drawn by his warm hands, wake and come forth into a warmth and a light that waited above them while they were dead, and that would have bathed them yet, and all summer long, though they had still lain torpid?

The declaration of the Bible is not this, that God, looking upon us, and beholding us imperiled, and overwhelmed, and vexed with evil passions, and seeing that, notwithstanding our condition, some germs of love were beginning to develop and blossom in us toward him, felt kindly drawn toward us, and began to love us because we loved him; but this, that he began to love us when we began to be; that at the beginning of our existence he began to pour out his effulgent nature upon us, and that it was the sunlight of his being that developed affection in us, and caused us to love him. God did not love man because man had prepared himself and made himself lovely, nor did divine love spring forth from any deed of God's by which he, for purposes of government, aroused and incited himself to strong emotion. Love springs not from an act, not from a fact of redemptive sacrifice. There is an impression among some that God loved the world after he had sent his Son to die for it, but the Scriptural view is that his love for the world was the cause of his sending his Son to die for it. The love of God for the world was manifested in that act, instead of being created by it.

The plow prepares the field, deeply furrowed, to receive the benefit of the summer sun, but the plow does not make the sun shine. God did not, then, begin to love when Christ died. His death prepared the human family to perceive, to understand, to be moved by that wondrous love that had gone on glowing through infinite ages, and kindling throughout the universal domain the glorious summer of divine goodness. Before creation, and the cause of it, was God's benevolence. Before the development of the human race, and as the prolific cause of it, was divine love. Before the advent of

Jesus Christ, and as the cause of it, was God's love. And, in each individual case, in each Christian's history, before his own volition, and as the very moving influence and cause of it, is this love of God, which precedes being, and precedes volition, and precedes conduct, and which is the cause of all that is good in man or in races.

With this fact before us, I wish to employ it for our quickening and our enlargement in divine knowledge and virtuous life.

I. God's love does not depend upon our character, but upon his own. I do not mean to say that it makes no difference whether a man has a good or a bad character. I do not mean to affirm that there do not spring up, between the divine nature and ourselves, by reason of our relations to that nature, certain deeper intimacies, and more wonderful affections. But I do mean to affirm this, that there is a great overshadowing love of God to us, that exists, not on account of our character, but on account of his. We have it distinctly stated, in respect to the sinful, that God loves them, and sends all the ordinary gifts of nature upon them, although he knows they are evil. And it is made the ground and motive of conduct for us. We are taught by Christ on this very point. "If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." And what is God's perfection? It is boundless benevolence. It is the perfection of a being who sends all providential blessings upon men, whether they are good or bad, deserving or undeserving. We must be perfect *as* he is. There is to be a comprehensive beneficence in us. We are to be in a state of feeling that shall lead us to do good to men without regard to the mere question of desert. Our conduct toward men is to proceed, not upon the kindness springing from justice, but upon the justice which springs from love. The teaching of Christ is that we

should serve men, not because they are deserving, but because there ought to be such a fullness and richness of nature in us that we can not refrain from doing it.

It is very certain that when God looks upon men, whether Christian or otherwise, he can not love them because he sees that they are lovely, for when measured by that rule which God must needs employ—his own perfectness and his own purity—I suppose there never has been a human character that could look otherwise than wretchedly sinful and distorted. Calling men Christians does not make them symmetrical, nor beautiful, nor lovely. Men are good and noble in relation to their fellow-men; but when they are considered in relation to God, how different does the case become!

Let a man be brought up in a hospital, and let him draw his ideas of beauty from it, and then bring before him a handsome man, and how homely do the men that he has regarded as handsome appear in the contrast! Take the best man in this life, and lift him up, and measure him, not by his fellow-men, weak and imperfect, but by those higher conceptions which men have of the divine being, and how they are dwarfed and humbled by the comparison! There is no stand-point from which a man, when measured by the divine character, appears beautiful; and if God loves men, it must be because there is a nature in him that can love what is not beautiful, not symmetrical, not perfect, not loveable.

If with a microscope you examine the sting of a bee, magnifying it a million times, you will find that still it is so smooth that the eye can detect no variations upon its surface. But if you take the finest needle that is manufactured, and look at it through a powerful microscope, it will appear rough in the proportion in which it is magnified. This figure illustrates the difference between the divine nature and the nature of man. The more you magnify a true conception of God's nature, the more beautiful does he appear; whereas, the more you magnify the nature of man, the more imperfect does it appear. And it is evident that if God loves

man it is because he has something in himself that moves him to love, and not because there is any thing in man that calls forth his love.

II. The divine love exists and works upon us, not alone when we are conscious, but evermore. Men mount up under flashes of glorious realization, and it seems as if God then began to love them, because they then first become sensitive to his love. When a man has passed through religious changes from darkness to light; when he has put off his worldly character, and taken on the character of Christ; when, coming out of despondency, the compassionate Savior rises before his imagination, and he says, "Christ has begun to love me"—his impression is that the divine love for him began when the burden which had weighed down his soul was rolled off.

This is as if a blind man, who had never seen the heavens, nor the earth, nor the sweet faces of those who loved him, should have a surgical operation performed upon his eyes, resulting in the restoration of his sight, and he should think to himself, on going out of doors, "Oh! how things are blossoming! The earth is beginning to be beautiful! Mountains and hills are springing up in every direction! The forms of loving friends are being raised up to meet my gaze! And the sun has just begun to shine forth from the heavens!" But have not these things existed since the creation, although the man's eyes have not before been in a condition to enable him to see them?

When we are brought into the consciousness of what God's love is to our poor sinful natures, we oftentimes have the feeling that God is beginning to be reconciled to us. We take it for granted that as we were at enmity with him, so he, in the same sense, was at enmity with us. We have an idea that he was just as hard toward us as we were persistent in violating his will, and that it was when we began to love him that he began to love us. It was then that we began to realize his love, but his love for us had existed from the time we

came into being, and had ever continued with us. All the experiences of our inward and outward lives had been baptized, although unconsciously to us, in his tender thoughts. Those thoughts run after us more than a mother's for her child that has gone recklessly away from home.

Do you suppose that a child, absent from his parents, is conscious of one in a million of the thoughts that follow him? There is love enough in one human heart to deluge the whole earth, and if man is capable of such love, what must be the love of which God is capable?

This conception of God's love does not always dawn upon the Christian at the beginning of his experience. God rises upon the sight of some Christians as the sun comes right up against a clear sky, and over a sharp-cut horizon, and upon others as the sun comes up behind clouds, which it is his first work to wear out and disperse with his bright beams. I have seen men that never realized God till they were dying. Some never see him till the midday of their life. Others see him early in the morning. Some see him during sickness; some after sickness; some on the occurrence of some special providence. Sometimes Christians are lifted up, through the susceptibility of their imagination, their affections, and their reason, all conjoined, into such an extraordinary sense of God's glory that it seems as though their soul could not abide in the body, and they think, "Praise God! At last he has had mercy on me, and revealed himself to me"—supposing that he had not before cast the light of his countenance upon them.

A man has lived in a cellar, where he has been a poor, dungeoned creature, striving to live a life which was but like a prolonged death. At last he is permitted to go up one story, and then one story higher, and then yet another story. Thus he keeps on exploring and going up, until finally he reaches the roof. There he beholds the heavens over his head, and the sun in the east, and he is tranced with amazement by the glory of the things which surround him. And yet, every single day during his existence, and for countless ages, the

heavens have hung above the earth, the sun has shone forth in splendor, and the creations which astonish his vision have been beheld by men. For forty years he has been in the cellar, and now that he has come up where he can see, it seems to him that objects have now appeared for the first time, because he sees them for the first time.

So it is with the disclosures of the love of God in Christ Jesus to Christians. They think that the time at which they first realize God's love is the time when it is first shed upon them. But as God pours abroad infinite breadths of his being without an eye except his own to behold, so he spreads over our heads an unknown, an unmeasured, and an immeasurable love, waiting for our recognition, but in no wise depending upon it. I know of nothing that is calculated to give more hope to the Christian in the midst of his discouragements than this feeling—namely, "I am not to be saved because I am so good, but because God is so good."

I know that you can abuse this for your own destruction. A man may say, "I can live as I have a mind to, and yet God will love me," and relax his own efforts, and work his own ruin. Nevertheless, there is nothing so comforting and inspiring to the Christian as this: the belief that our hope and safety do not stand in the fact that we are good, but in the fact that God has undertaken to take care of us and save us.

Some men have asked me, "How is it that a Christian can sin every day, and still have hope that he will be forgiven by a God that abhors iniquity?" Do not I know the way in which God forgives those who sin thus? Do not I feel it myself in a small measure? Tell me if, in your own experience, there is not something that interprets it to you? Is there not a wife, a husband, a child, a friend, a ward, some human being on whom you have set your affections, but whom you see to be imperfect? And do you not find that the more you love them the more sensitive you are to their faults, and yet the more able you are to endure their imperfections and unsymmetries? When they do wrong, violate

generosity and magnanimity, act selfishly, and show themselves proud, you grieve, but forbear; you resent their evil by seeking to correct it. What do you do when a loved one does wrong? Do you sit in judgment on him, and cut him off from your affections? On the contrary, does not your heart go out after him all the more? One whom you soundly and deeply love, you love in spite of his faults not only, but you are conscious that you love to cure. A certain yearning to help him shows that true love is true physician.

Now, as it is with us, so it is with God; and I am more ashamed to sin against God on this very account. If I were greatly in want of money, and I went for aid to an old usurious, miserly man, who hated to give, and only gave for a consideration, and scolded when he gave, I do not know but I should take a little comfort in pestering him. I suppose there is a little relish of torment which every one feels in dealing with such a man. But if I went for aid to a man of a kind and generous nature, the case would be different. I am in trouble; he meets me with a face bright with smiles, and says, "You have come again to give me the pleasure of assisting you." I say, "I have liabilities to the amount of five hundred dollars which I am unable to meet." "What! is that all?" he exclaims, and gives me a thousand. As I start to go away, he says, "I shall see you again; I shall get another chance at you; I shall have more pleasure out of you!" By-and-by I go to him again, hanging my head, when his first words to me are, "Ah! your pocket is empty and your head is down. Come in! come in! You can not get away so easily." And again he gives me the money I need. Again I get into deeper trouble. Sickness enters my family, and my means give out. In my distress I go to him once more. The moment he sees me he says, "What! spent your money so soon? I declare, I do not know but I shall have to make you my son. I must look after your affairs. I see you can not attend to them yourself." He sweeps away my debts, supplies my present wants, and urges me to come

whenever I find myself pressed for means. Now suppose I say, when I get by myself, "This old man is so kind and good that I can practice on him, and I will take advantage of his kindness and goodness," what ought I to be called? Would any name of contempt be too severe?

It is argued by some that men will take advantage of this love of God of which I am speaking. No, not *men*. You must get some other name for those creatures that are capable of doing that. The apostle, when the expediency of preaching the grace of God in Christ Jesus was questioned, argued that the very nature of love estopped a disposition to take mean advantage of it. If a man loves Christ enough to secure the benefit of his grace, it is inconsistent with the very nature of the experience to suppose that he can take base advantage of it.

III. There is something unspeakably affecting to me in this thought of—what may I call it?—the solitude of divine love for men, and its patient continuance in God without consciousness on our part. There is something sweet in interpreting the nature of God from the family. Now who can tell the sum of the thoughts which the mother bestows on the child? All through his infancy he is scarcely out of her mind. She watches him as he sleeps in the cradle. She wakes at night to go and see if all is safe in the room where he is. All day long, as he plays, her eyes are upon him, to see that no harm comes to him. And all through his boyhood her love and care surround him. And yet he is unconscious of most of her solicitude concerning him. He knows that she loves him, but he only feels the pulsations of her love once in a while. I think we never know the love of the parent for the child till we become parents. When we first bend over our own cradle God throws back the temple door, and reveals to us the sacredness and mystery of a father's and a mother's love to us. And I think that in later years, when they have gone from us, there is always a certain sorrow because we can not tell our parents that we have found

out their love. One of the deepest experiences of a noble nature in reference to loved ones that have passed beyond this world is the thought of what he might have been to them, and what he might have done for them, if he had known, while they were living, what he has learned since they died.

Now when I think how the love of Christ, and the love of God in Christ, has overhung my life; when I think of the long period during which I had no conception of that love, of the long period during which I resisted it and struggled against it; when I think that during these long periods God, unchanged and unchangeable, brooded over me and yearned for me without my knowing it, I am inexpressibly affected.

Not only does God think of us constantly, and love us steadfastly, but there is a healing, curative nature forever outworking from the divine mind upon ours, even although we may not co-operate voluntarily with his will. All those moral tendencies which we feel, all those yearnings which we have for good, are the crying out of the soul for God, under the influence and ministration of his love to us. Every throb of our spirits that answers to spiritual things is caused by the influence of God. We are attracted by him, though we may not be conscious of it. As the child that is sent away from home to school grows homesick, and sobs, and cries for brothers and sisters, and father and mother, so there are many homesick men who feel in themselves strange yearnings for they know not what. It is their soul crying out for God, because he is working upon them by the power of his thought and love—only they do not know the language.

And that is not all. We have testimony in the workings of the providence of God in the experiences of our daily life, that God's love is still shed upon us, although we may be unconscious of it. I recollect to have read the case of a man in a city of Southern Europe who spent his life in getting property, and became unpopular among his fellow-citizens on account of what seemed to them his miserly spirit. When his

will was read after his death, it stated that he had been poor, and had suffered from a lack of water, that he had seen the poor of the city also suffering from the same want, and that he had devoted his life to the accumulation of means sufficient to build an aqueduct to bring water to the city, so that forever afterward the poor should be supplied with it. It turned out that the man whom the poor had cursed till his death had been laboring to provide water for the refreshment of themselves and their children. Oh! how God has been building an aqueduct to bring the water of life to us, he not interpreting his acts, and we not understanding them!

IV. God's love is not, as too often ours is, the collateral and incidental element of his life and being. It is his abiding state. All time and all eternity are filled with it. All plans are conceived and directed by it. All histories and all administrations are transfused with, and carried forward in, it. All triumphs are to end in it, while all that can not be made to harmonize, and blend, and co-operate with it shall be utterly swept away.

With this interpretation, let me give now a few words of application.

1. Can any other truth so justify and enforce an earnest, instant, manly search to see if these things be so? There are a great many persons that will resist an appeal made from the pulpit if that which is meant is ecclesiasticism. I mean no such thing. I do not ask you to join a church. Men will resist an appeal to become Christians if a doctrinal basis is implied. I now and here imply no such thing. But I make this appeal to every fair-minded, thoughtful, honest, and morally susceptible man: If there is such a divine nature as I have described, can any man justify himself a moment in leaving it unappreciated and unknown? We are commanded to search for God as for hid treasures. Ought *you* not to search for him as you do for hid treasures? Is there such a being? Is he your father? Are his thoughts toward you those of paternal love; and is that love infinite, exquisite,

and overflowing? And are you living unconscious, ungrateful, unrequiting? Are you cared for and sustained through the love of God? And is it consistent with manhood that you should be without thankfulness?

We are grateful toward the bountiful benefactor of all men as that man would be grateful who should show his gratitude for a whole life's service by merely making a New Year's call on his benefactor. You are perpetual recipients of God's mercies. In the round year there is not one moment in which he does not brood over you with his thoughts. His love and tenderness are to you what the sun and dew are to the plant. During the long experience of forty or fifty years he has not left you nor forsaken you. And has there been manifested on your part any love, or gratitude, or recognition that answered to the noble affection which he has displayed toward you? I do not ask you whether you believe in this church or that, or whether you hold to this doctrine or that. I present to you this love of God that has upheld you all the days of your life, and ask you this question: Can you, with reason, with honor, with gratitude, with any sentiment that a man ought to cherish, be indifferent to it? There are many in this congregation who are exemplary men, who do nothing in violation of a decent respect for the customs of society, but who are living so as not to fulfill the first condition of their life—a recognition of the love of God toward them. Need they seek farther for evidence of their great sinfulness and urgent danger? Are they not wearing out, or burying their moral natures?

2. If what I have said is true, can any honorable man justify himself for not coming into a living faith in, and communion with, God? Can such excellence as his be near you, and you care nothing for it, without degradation? We judge men not merely by the acts which they positively perform, but by the sensibility which they display. If we see a man indifferent when in an assembly where most weighty matters are being discussed, we pity him. We say, "That cir-

cumstance shows what his nature is." I have sometimes had the misfortune to sit in concerts where persons would chatter, and giggle, and laugh during the performance of the profoundest passages of the symphonies of the great artists, and I never fail to think, at such times, "I ask not *who* you are; I know *what* you are, by the way you conduct yourself here—by the want of sympathy and appreciation which you evince in what is passing around you." Who could restrain his contempt for a man who should stand looking upon Niagara Falls without exhibiting emotions of awe and admiration? If we were to see a man walk through galleries of genius totally unimpressed by what he saw, we should say to ourselves, "Let us be rid of such an unsusceptible creature as that."

I ask you to pass upon yourselves the same judgment. What do you suppose angels, that have trembled and thrilled with ecstatic joy in the presence of God, think when they see how indifferent you are to the divine love and goodness in which you are perpetually bathed, and by which you are blessed and sustained every moment of your lives? How can they do otherwise than accuse you of monstrous ingratitude and moral insensibility, which betoken guilt as well as danger?

3. Will not the realization of such a nature, brought home to us personally, account for all the sometimes discredited Christian experiences? When men are convicted of sin, they are sometimes subjects of ridicule, because it is supposed that they are merely acting under the influence of an excited imagination. There may be cases in which this is so. I do not affirm that all terror-quaking for sin is normal and rational. But, let me ask, if there is such a being as God is supposed to be, is it strange that a man, when he comes to the consciousness that that being is his Father, should be so wrought upon as to even lose control of himself? A conviction of sin may be spurious, or it may be overlaid by misteaching, but the constitution of man is such that if he under-

goes genuine conviction of sin he is apt to experience strong feelings of fear, shame, and remorse. When one brings himself before God, and falls down in his presence, comprehending the mystery of his love, and understanding the redemptive manifestations of it, is it strange that he finds himself swallowed up in it, and that, having joy unspeakable and full of glory, he gives outward expression to it?

Suppose I sit musing on the Acropolis, and my whole being is carried into the days that have gone by, so that I can scarcely eat or sleep, does any one say that I am unduly excited? Is not my susceptibility to the things that occupy my mind a mark of manhood? If I stand and look with wonder and admiration upon those magnificent cathedrals of mediæval times, does any one say that I exhibit signs of madness? Do I not, rather, exhibit signs of taste and refinement? If I read with pleasure and satisfaction the thoughts penned by the profoundest thinkers of the past, does any one say that I degrade myself? Do I not, on the contrary, honor myself? And is not this the natural and spontaneous utterance of a noble heart, when it is lifted up into the conscious presence of God: "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were *all* dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again?"

I have in my house a little sheet of paper on which there is a faint, pale, and not particularly skillful representation of a hyacinth. It is not half as beautiful as many other pictures that I have, but I regard it as the most exquisite of them all. My mother painted it, and I never see it that I do not think that her hand rested on it, and that her thought was concerned in its execution.

Now suppose you had such a conception of God that you never saw a flower, a tree, a cloud, or any natural object, that you did not instantly think, "My Father made it," what a world would this become to you! How beautiful would it seem to you! How would you find that nature was a rev-

elation of God, speaking as plainly as his written Word, though not so deeply or variously. If you are alone, desolate in your circumstances, it is because you have not that inner sense of the divine love and care which it is your privilege to have, and which you ought to have.

Throughout the Bible it is declared that the things that we are permitted to see in this life are but intimations, glimpses of what we shall see hereafter. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." There are times when it seems as though our circumstances, our nature, all the processes of our being, conspired to make us joyful here, yet the apostle says we now see through a glass darkly. What, then, must be the vision which we shall behold when we go to that abode where we shall see face to face? Into what a land of glory have you sent your babes! Into what a land of delight have you sent your children and companions! To what a land of blessedness are you yourselves coming by-and-by! Men talk about dying as though it was going toward a desolate place. All the past in a man's life is down hill, and toward gloom; and all the future in a man's life is up hill, and toward glorious sunrising. There is but one luminous point, and that is the home toward which we are tending, above all storms, above all sin and peril. Dying is glorious crowning; living is yet toiling. If God be yours, all things are yours. If Christ be yours, all heaven is yours. Live while you must, but yearn for the day of consummation, when the door shall be thrown open, that the bird may fly out of his netted cage, and be heard singing in higher spheres and diviner realms.

III.

The Sepulchre in the Garden:

A Sermon to

The Sorrowing.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, July 1st, 1860.

The Sepulchre in the Garden.

"Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus."—John, xix., 41, 42.

"And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre."—Matt., xxvii., 61.

How strange a watch was that! but how oftentimes repeated since! How strange a combination of circumstances, that the cross should have been lifted up so near to a garden; that the garden, of all places, should have held, amid its treasures, such a thing as a sepulchre hewn in a rock; that thus a cold grave should have been embosomed among flowers, and waited, for weeks, and months, and years, the coming of its sacred guest! And now, how striking the picture! A few words, and the whole stands open to the imagination as to the very sight! The two women, side by side, silent, and yet knowing each other's thoughts, with one grief—with one yearning—with one suffering! Home was forgotten, and nature itself was unheeded. The odorous vines, the generous blossoms, the world of sights around them, were as if they were not. There was the rock, and only that to them. There was neither daylight, nor summer, nor balm, nor perfume. There were no lilies by their feet, nor roses around them; for though there were ten thousand of them, there was to them only that cold, gray, sepulchral rock.

See what a life theirs had been. First was their own birth. It is strange that one should be grown in years before being able to recognize his own birth; but so it is. We are not born when the body is—we are born afterward—sometimes

through silent influences developing, and oftentimes rudely born by the stroke of some overmastering sorrow, or led forth by some exceeding joy. So it was with them. They had lived years without fulfilling one year. They had loved without really loving. They had known without really knowing. Their nature and full power lay in them, but as buds lie in branches, and there had been no summer to bring them forth. Only when Christ came did they find themselves, for men never can find themselves of themselves, but always in the touch of some other and higher one. And only then, when these women saw a nature full of strength, full of purity, with a heart that went like summer through the land, did they know what it was to live. Before, they had been as they are who, neither asleep nor awake, hover between dreams and realities, fully possessed by neither. But in the full presence of Christ these Marys received their own life. They loved, and loved worthily and upwardly. And then they knew what hidden life the soul possesses.

Now life blossomed at every step to them. There can be no barrenness in full summer. The very sand will yield something. Rocks will have mosses, and every rift will have its wind-flower, and every crevice a leaf, while from the fertile soil will be reared a gorgeous troop of growths that will carry their life in ten thousand forms, but all with praise to God. And so it is when the soul knows its summer. Love redeems its weakness, clothes its barrenness, enriches its poverty, and makes its very desert to bud and blossom as the rose. And these two Marys had in the presence of Christ waked into life. They were not born until he gave them their life. They followed, therefore, reverently, all his goings. They waited for him when absent as they that wait for the morning. Now there was a future to them. Every day increased their conscious treasure. Each day, however, they knew that they had come to the end and bound of their capacity, were full, and could hold no more love, nor joy of

loving. And yet every next day they smiled at the barrenness of the past, and wondered how that could have seemed enough which was so much less than the present.

The future glowed brighter and brighter to them. Not that they were not mortal, and did not expect troubles. But storms, even, are radiant when the sun shines upon them, and troubles upon an orb of hope and love are sunlit clouds, whose gorgeous hues take all terror from the bolt and the stroke.

And so these loving souls, I suppose, followed Christ, and found a daily heaven. His serene nature; his beneficence; his all-encompassing sympathy; his disinterestedness, that gave every thing but asked nothing; his supernal wisdom; his power over life; his regency over nature; his lordship over the winds that flew to his hand as a dove to its nest; his mastery over darkness and death itself, calling back the departed spirit from its far-off wandering to life again; his effluent glory, as he hung in mid-air, sustained by white clouds, or as he walked the night-sea, carpeted with darkness; but, above all, that inspiration, that heavenly purity, that spiritual life that touched their life, and aroused them as never before were they aroused—in short, the presence of their God!—all these things, abiding with them, traveling from day to day with them, measuring out their golden year, gave them their first full knowledge of life as the soul recognizes it! And these were, to their fond hope, doubtless, a perpetual gift.

Nothing seems ever to have awakened the disciples to such instant fear, even to chiding and rebuke, as the intimation of their Master that he would leave them! It seemed like a threat of destruction to them. They were the more amazed and confounded, therefore, when the treacherous disciple betrayed him, when he yielded himself to authority, when injustice condemned him, smote him, tortured him, crucified him. Life was to them, now, no longer a waking bliss, but the torment of a wild and hideous dream. A horrible insanity it seemed. Yet it was constantly before them. They

followed him to the city; they followed him out of the city; they followed him till the procession stopped upon the hill; they saw; they heard; they agonized. And when the earthquake shook the ground, not another thing did it jar so heedless and so griefful as those wondering, amazed, and disappointed women. They stood in a very darkness, and their life was like a grave. All the past was a garden, and this present hour stood up in the midst of it like a sepulchre.

At first grief was too great. They were winter-stricken. The very rigor of their sorrow would let nothing flow. But as warmth makes even glaciers trickle, and opens streams in the ribs of frozen mountains, so the heart knows the full flow and life of its grief only when it begins to melt and pass away.

There, then, sat these watchers. The night came, and the night went, "and *there* was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre." What to them was that sepulchre? It was the end and sum of life. It was the evidence and fact of vanity and sorrow. It was an exposition of their infatuation. It proved to them the folly of love and the weakness of purity. The noblest experience of the purest souls had ended in such bitter disappointment that they now knew that *they* only are wise who can say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Could such a one be stricken and die? Could such a one be gathered into the shapeless rock? Could such a light go out, and such a soul be overwhelmed? What star, then, was there for hope in human life? What was safe? What use in love, in trust, in honor, in purity, since the Head and Glory of them all was not saved by them?

This rebuke of life, of soul, of their heart-love, at length drove them away. There was no garden to them where such a sepulchre stood. They returned; but oh, what a return! There was no more life when they went away from him that had awakened by love true life in them. The night was not half so dark as were their souls. In a great afflic-

tion there is no light either in the stars or in the sun. For when the inner light is fed with fragrant oil, there can be no darkness though the sun should go out; but when, like a sacred lamp in the temple, the inward light is quenched, there is no light outwardly, though a thousand suns should preside in the heavens. To them life was all darkness.

And yet, while that garden held the sepulchre, and the women sat watching it, and saw only darkness and desolation, how blind they were! How little, after all, did they know! When first all was a bright certainty, how little then did they know! And when, afterward, all was dark woe, how little yet did they know! The darkness and the light were both alike to them, for they were ignorant alike of both. How little did they expect or suspect! Of all the garden, only the rock itself was a true soil, for in it lay the "root of David." Forth from that unlikely spot should come a flower whose blossom would restore Eden to the world; for if a garden saw man's fall, forth from the garden came his life again. But their eyes were holden that they should not see. Their hearts were burdened that they should not know. They saw only the sepulchre, and the stone rolled against the door. They saw, they felt, they despaired!

And yet, against sight, against sense, against hope, they lingered. If they departed, they could not abide away; they must needs come again; for "in the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and" (like them that triumph) "sat upon it." But now their sad musings, the utter despair of the reason and of the senses, the anxiety, the vigilance of the heart—these were the only things that were left to them. And yet, as in many cases, their hearts proved surer and better guides than their reason or their thoughts; for as a root scents moisture in a dry place, or a plant even in darkness aims al-

ways at the light, so the heart forever aims at hope and at immortality. And it was a woman's heart here that hung as the morning star of that bright rising of the Sun of Righteousness. In the end of the Sabbath Christ came forth, and they were the ones whose upturned faces took his first light.

Such is this brief history; and if we were to carry it out in all its analogies, if we were to stretch forth its light so as to encompass all those who have had a like experience with these two women, how wide would be its reaches! how long would be the rehearsal!

1. There is a sepulchre in every garden. We are all of us in this life seeking for beauty and seeking for joy, following the blind instincts of our nature, every one of which was made to point up to something higher than that which the present realizes. We are often, almost without aim, without any true guidance, seeking to plant this life so that it shall be to us what a garden is. And we seek out the fairest flowers, and will have none but the best fruits. Striving against the noxious weed, striving against the stingy soil, striving against the inequalities of the season, still these are our hope. Whatever may be our way of life, whatever may be the instrumentalities which we employ, that which we mean is Eden. It is this that they mean who seek the structures of power, and follow the leadings of ambition. This they mean who dig for golden treasures, not to see the shining of the gold, but to use it as a power for fashioning happiness. They who build a home and surround themselves with all the sweet enjoyments of social life are but planting a garden. The scholar has his garden. The statesman, too, has a fancied Eden with fruit and flower. The humble, and those that stand high, are all of them seeking to clothe the barren experiences of this world with buds that blossom, blossoms that shall bear fruit. No man sees the sepulchre among his flowers. There shall be no lurking corner for the tempter, overleaping the wall of their happiness, to hover around their fair paradise! There shall be nothing there

that shall represent time, and decay, and wickedness, and sorrow! Man's uninstructed idea of happiness in this life is that of a serene heaven without a cloud — a smooth earth without a furrow — a fair sward without a rock. It is the hope and expectation of men, the world over (and it makes no difference what their civilization is, what their culture, or what their teaching), that they shall plant their garden, and have flowers without thorns, summer without a winter, a garden without a rock, a rock without a sepulchre!

It makes very little difference that we see other men's delusions. Nay, we stand upon the wall of our particular experience, as upon the walls of a garden, to moralize upon the follies of other men. And when they have their hands pierced in plucking their best fruits, when disappointments come to their plantings, we wonder that they should be so blind as to expect that this world could have joys without sorrows, or sunshine without storms. We carry instructions to them, and comfort them with the talk that this life is short and full of affliction; we speak to them of the wreaths to be worn by those who bear sorrows; and yet we go as fondly and expectantly to our dream of hope as ever. Ah! it was the cradle of your neighbor that was left empty, and not your own! That fair blossom that was picked was plucked from the next household! You turn with even more than your wonted infatuation to your own cradle, to rejoice in its security. *It* shall never be desolate!

The experience of every fresh mourner is, "I knew that Death was in the world, but I never thought that my beloved could die." Every one that comes to the grave says, coming, "I never thought that I should bury my heart here." Though from the beginning of the world it hath been so; though the ocean itself would be overflowed if the drops of sorrow unexpected that have flowed should be gathered together and rolled into its deep places; though the life of man, without an exception, has been taken away in the midst of his expectations, and dashed with sorrow, yet no man

learns the lesson taught by these facts, and every man lays out his paradise afresh, and runs the furrow of execution around about it, and marks out its alleys and beds, and plants flowers and fruits, and cultures them with a love that sees no change and expects no sorrow!

No man means to have any thing in his paradise but flowers and fruits. If there is a rock in it, it is only a rock for shadow and coolness, or a rock for decoration and beauty. No man will have a garden with a sepulchre in it. *Your* garden has no sepulchre in it. If you are young and fresh, if you are beginning life, you will hear this sermon as a poetic descant, as a tender, musing homily. In the opening out of your expectant wealth and life it is all garden-like, but no sepulchre is there! There is no open mouth of consuming bankruptcies; there are no disappointments, miscalculations, and blunders that bring you to the earth; there is no dismaying of ambition—no thwarting or turning back of all-encompassing desires. There is fresh dew on the leaf, and rain at the root, and in your mind a full expectation that your garden shall blossom as the rose.

And thus men live as they have lived, every man making his life a garden planted; every man saying, "Flowers! flowers! flowers!" and when they come, every man saying, "They shall abide; they shall blossom in an endless summer." And we go round and round the secret place, the central place—we go round and round the point where in every man's experience there is a sepulchre—and we heed it not, and will not know it.

2. But, in spite of all this care and painstaking, there *is no garden* in the world, let it be as beautiful as it may, that has not in the midst of it a sepulchre. When we sit over against it with untaught hearts, we find out what we would not permit ourselves to know in all the earlier stages, though it was there all the time. Every one of us is traveling right toward the grave. I mean not the extreme of life; I mean not that common truth that every man is born to die; I include that;

but I mean that every man has a sphere of life where there is a sepulchre in which all that makes his life valuable to him while he yet lives in this world is liable to be buried and hidden from his sight. There is no man that is sure of any thing except of dying and living again. We see on every side such revelations, such changes, such surprises, such unexpected happenings and events, that it is not mere poetical moralizing to say that no man is certain of any thing except death, to be succeeded by life.

A plow is coming from the far end of a long field, and a daisy stands nodding, and full of dew-dimples. That furrow is sure to strike the daisy. It casts its shadow as gayly, and exhales its gentle breath as freely, and stands as simple, and radiant, and expectant as ever; and yet that crushing furrow, which is turning and turning others in its course, is drawing near, and in a moment it whirls the heedless flower with sudden reversal under the sod!

And as is the daisy, with no power of thought, so are ten thousand thinking, sentient flowers of life, blossoming in places of peril and yet thinking that no furrow of disaster is running in toward them — that no iron plow of trouble is about to overturn them. Sometimes it dimly dawns upon us, when we see other men's mischiefs and wrongs, that we are in the same category with them, and that perhaps the storms which have overtaken them will overtake us also. But it is only for a moment, for we are artful to cover the ear and not listen to the voice that warns us of our danger.

And so, although every man's garden is planted without a sepulchre, yet every man's garden has a sepulchre, and he stands near it, and oftentimes lays his hand upon it, and is utterly ignorant of it. But it will open. No man will ever walk through this life and reverse the experience, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." It comes to us all; not to make us sad, as we shall see by-and-by, but to make us sober; not to make us sorry, but to make us wise; not to make us despondent, but by its darkness to

refresh us, as the night refreshes the day; not to impoverish us, but to enrich us, as the plow enriches the field—to multiply our joy, as the seed is multiplied a hundred-fold by planting. Our conception of life is not divine, and our thought of garden-making is not inspired. Our earthly flowers are quickly planted, and they quickly bloom, and then they are gone; while God would plant those flowers which, by transplantation, shall live forever.

3. When, then, our sorrow comes, when we are in the unin structed surprise of our trouble, when we first discover this sepulchre in our garden, we sit, as these women sat, over against the sepulchre, seeing, in our grief, nothing else but that. How strangely stupid is grief! How it neither learns nor knows, nor wishes to learn nor know! Grief is like the stamping of invisible ink. Great and glorious things are written with it, but they do not come out till they are brought out. It is not until heat has been applied to it, or until some chemical substance has been laid upon it, that that which was invisible begins to come forth in letter, and sentence, and meaning. In the first instance we see in life only death—we see in change destruction. When the sisters sat over against the door of the sepulchre, did they see the two thousand years that have passed triumphing away? Did they see any thing but this: "Our Christ is gone?" And yet your Christ and my Christ came from their loss; myriad myriad mourning hearts have had resurrection in the midst of *their* grief; and yet the sorrowful watchers looked at the seed-form of this result and saw nothing. What they regarded as the end of life was the very preparation for coronation; for Christ was silent that he might live again in tenfold power. They saw it not. They looked on the rock, and it was rock. They looked upon the stone door, and it was the stone door that estopped all their hope and expectation. They mourned, and wept, and went away, and came again, drawn by their hearts, to the sepulchre. Still it was a sepulchre, unprophetic, voiceless, lustreless.

So with us. Every man sits over against the sepulchre in his garden, in the first instance, and says, "It is grief; it is woe; it is immedicable trouble. I see no benefit in it. I will take no comfort from it." And yet, right in our deepest and worst mishaps, often and often, our Christ is lying, waiting for resurrection. Where our death seems to be, there our Savior is. Where the end of hope is, there is the brightest beginning of fruition. Where the darkness is thickest, there the bright beaming light that never is to set is about to emerge.

When the whole experience is consummated, then we find that a garden is not disfigured by a sepulchre. Our joys are made better if there be a sorrow in the midst of them, and our sorrows are made bright by the joys that God has planted around about them. The flowers may not be pleasing to us, they may not be such as we are fond of plucking, but they are heart-flowers. Love, hope, faith, joy, peace—these are flowers which are planted around about every grave that is sunk in a Christian heart. For the present it is not "joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

In so great a congregation as this, where there are so many thousands that by invisible threads are connected with this vital teaching-point, sorrow becomes almost a literature, and grief almost a lore, and we are in danger of walking over the road of consolation so frequently that at last it becomes to us a road hard and dusty. We are accustomed to take certain phrases, as men take medicinal herbs, and apply them to bruised, and wounded, and suffering hearts, until we come to have a kind of ritualistic formality. It is good, therefore, that every one of us, now and then, should be brought back to the reality of the living truth of the Gospel by some heart-quake—by some sorrow—by some suffering. Flowers mislead us, beguile us, enervate us, and make us earthly, even if they assume the most beautiful forms of loveliness; while troubles translate us, develop us, win us from things that are

too low to be worthy of us, and bring us into the presence and under the conscious power of God.

4. But it is Christ in the sepulchre that is to give us all our joy and all our hope in the midst of disappointments and reversals. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. Blessed are they that sleep in Jesus. Blessed are they that have heard the Bridegroom's voice, and have gone out to meet him. Blessed are they that are able to see in their troubles such a resurrection of Christ that, in the joy they experience from the realization of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon them, they shall quite forget the troubles themselves.

When once the sisters that watched had been permitted to gaze upon the risen Christ, to clasp his hand, to worship him, where was the memory of their past trouble? What was their thought of the arrest, of the shameful trial—which was no trial—of the crucifixion, and death, and burial? These were all gone from their minds. As when the morning comes we are apt to forget the night out of which it came, so when out of trouble comes new happiness, when out of affliction comes new joy, when out of the crucifixion of the lower passions comes purification, we are apt to forget the process through which this happiness, this joy, this purification came. As there can be no sepulchre which can afford consolation that hath not a Christ ready to be revealed in it, so there can be no sorrow from which we can be well delivered that hath not in it a Christ ready to be revealed.

As, then, these Marys, in their very weakness, were stronger than when they thought themselves strong, as in the days of their sorrow they were nearer joy than when they were joyful, as when their expectations were cut off they were nearer a glorious realization than at any other period of their life, so, when we are weakest we may be strongest, when we are most cast down we may be nearest the moment of being lifted up, when we are most oppressed we are nearest deliverance, when we are most cut off we are nearest being joined forever and ever to him who is life indeed and joy indeed.

My Christian friends, we are very apt, in the regularity of teaching, to carry forward our faith of Christ to the dying hour, and to think of a Christ that can rise upon us in that mortal strife with healing in his beams. We are not apt to have Christ with us every day in its vicissitudes and disappointments; we are not apt to take Christ into that which belongs to universal life; we are not apt to take Christ into the checks, and frets, and hindrances, and misdirections of this world, into our bereavements and misfortunes. We are apt to regard Christ as remote from us, and to put him forward to the time of our final dismission from this world.

He that knows how to die in his passions every day, he that knows how to die in his pride from hour to hour, he that has Christ in each particular thwarting and event of life, he that knows how from the varied experiences of life to bring forth day by day a Christian character, need not fear the grand and final experience of earth to which he is coming. There is no death to those that know how to die beforehand. Those who know how to lay themselves upon Christ, and take the experiences of every-day life in the faith of Christ; those who see the will of God in every thing that abounds, whether wounding or healing—they have nothing left at the end of life except peace, translation, and the beginning of immortality.

It is this Savior that has so sweetened life, if we would but know it, who is our Master; and he stands in our midst today, saying to us, "In this world ye shall have tribulation." I am sent to say it to every one in this congregation. Tribulation may not come to you in the way in which you expect it, or in the way in which you see it developed in other persons. It may come unheralded. But the voice of the Lord hath spoken to every one of you, and said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation."

More than that. It pleased God to comfort you beforehand by the assurance that affliction is the token of paternal love. Nay, God puts it so strongly that one almost shrinks:

"If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." Christ says, again and again, that if you belong to his family you shall have trouble. Is it worth your while, then, to go on making your Eden without a sepulchre? Is it worth your while to go on making your picture all lights and no shadows? Is it worth your while to go on building and rebuilding the structure of life without considering that it is a part of human necessity, and a part of God's plan of mercy, that every man should have trouble, not once, not twice, but often; as he has his food—as he has his very being itself?

This is one side of Christ's message to every one of you today. How many of you have I seen in your troubles! How many of you have I walked with in your hour of anguish for sin! I look upon a congregation with one in every six of whom, it seems to me, I have gone down to the baptismal water, or sprinkled, and walked with through all the stages of their heart-distress. For how many of you have I spoken words of consolation at funerals? Where are the children, where are the brothers and sisters, where are the parents, where are the kindred of this church? Where are our old friends and co-workers? Where are those that were in the height of personal expectation ten years ago? We have lived ten years together, most of us—some of us longer than that—and have we not tracked God at every step, verifying his declaration, "Ye shall have tribulation?" And are we to look forward to the time to come with less expectation of tribulation? Look upon your household. Who shall be unclothed next? I desire to take this to myself. I desire to look at my plans and expectations in the light of this inquiry. For I, too, have made a garden, and have forgotten to put a sepulchre in it. I desire to commence a new survey. Let me go up to that central mound covered with flowers, and let me see if underneath those flowers there is not an opening mouth—the darkness of the grave. And if there is, then let me rejoice, for I am sure that that is an unwatered garden

which has no sepulchre. May God grant that I shall have no garden in which there is no sepulchre with a Christ about to emerge from a fruitful death. Will you look into your gardens — your money-garden, your pleasure-garden, your love-garden, your household-garden, your taste-garden? All the plants of your various gardens—will you look at them, and see if in the midst of them there is a place for a sepulchre? Will you see that there is a sepulchre in your gardens? And will you make that the centre of all your plantings?

I am sent by Christ to say to you another thing. First, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but," next, "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," and ye shall overcome it also. "Because I live, ye shall live also." That is the end of trouble. Now sorrow is crowned with hope. Now the gate is thrown open! Now the angel sits upon the stone! Now the emergent Christ walks forth light and glorious as the sun in the heavens! Now the lost is found! Now all the stars hang like gems, and jewels, and treasures for us! Now, since Christ says that out of all these experiences he shall bring forth life, even as his own life was brought forth out of the tomb, what is there that we need trouble ourselves about?

Christian brethren, do you know how to be glad, and to make others glad, in the midst of your trouble? Do you know how to stand in the midst of your losses and disappointments so that men shall say, "After all, it is not troublesome to be afflicted?" Do you know how to be peaceful in the midst of deepest bereavements? Do you know how to seek Christ in the very tomb? Do you know how to employ the tomb as the astronomer employs the lens, which in the darkness reveals to him vast depths and infinite stretches of created things in the space beyond? Do you know how to look through the grave and see what there is on the other side — the glory and power of God? Blessed are they to whom Christ hath revealed the meaning of the sepulchre.

And when, after a very little time, we go away from our sorrows and our sepulchral burying-places, we shall, as did these faithful watching women, meet our Christ victorious from the grave, glorified, exalted. And whatever we lose here that is worth weeping for we shall find again. When man reaps there is something for the gleaner's hands behind him. He shakes out many kernels for the soil, and drops many heads of wheat for the gleaner. But when God reaps he loses not one kernel, and drops not one single heavy head of grain. And whatever that is good has been taken from you—every straw, and every kernel, and every head—shall be garnered. Only that will remain in the earth which you would fain give to the earth, while that which the heart claims, and must have if it live, awaits you. Great are the joys that are before you, but they do not lie level with the earth. Great are the joys to which we are to come; we are traveling up to them.

Let us, then, to-day, renew, in the presence of our Master, our consecration to Christ, the Deliverer.* Let us accept him once more as our life. Let our life be hid in him. And when he shall appear, then we also, at last, shall be made known to each other. We shall see him as he is, and we shall be like him.

After the blessing is pronounced, we will remain, Christian brethren, a short time at this joyful hour, not to mourn over a broken Christ symbolized—for we know better—but to rejoice that the broken Savior is now the ever-living Prince, risen and clothed with immortal victory. We meet around these memorials. We take them for a starting-point. But we may go beyond them, and rest and rejoice in the bosom of ever-living love.

If there be present any that mourn for their sins, that despair of help in themselves, that feel their need of Christ, that yearn toward him, that long for him, and that are wil-

* The Lord's Supper was administered at the close of the sermon.

ling to accept him, them also I bid come home. This is your Father's house, and this is your Father's table. If you will be children of Christ, come and partake with us of these emblems. May God grant that every one of us who sit together in these earthly places in Christ Jesus may have the unspeakable joy, by-and-by, of sitting together in heavenly places.

IV.

The Divinity of Christ Maintained

in a

Consideration of his Relations to the Soul of Man.

This Sermon, preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, May 6th, 1860, has been entirely rewritten for this Volume.

The Divinity of Christ.

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."—Eph., i., 15-23.

The divinity of Christ is the one central truth of the New Testament. What Christ said and what he did are profoundly important, but what he *was* is transcendently more important. Christianity is not a system of ethics, of worship, of belief. Christianity is Christ. Personal influence, not intellectual instructions, is its peculiarity. The New Testament, as a record, presents a person who drew about him a band of disciples, and exerted upon them an influence which transformed their characters, and led them to bestow upon him that affection, reverence, and worship which men are at liberty to render only to God. They worshiped Christ rather because they felt the power of his divine nature than from an intellectual conviction that he was God.

One source of the conflicts in modern arguments for and against the divinity of Christ arises from the fact that a great truth presented to the mind of one age is tested by intellectual conceptions which have grown up since. We

bring an abstract philosophy to bear upon simple, practical truths. We attempt to deal with feelings, sentiments, enthusiasms, as if they were ideas. A few illustrations will make this manifest.

The old Hebrews taught the unity of God as opposed to Polytheism. It was not a discussion of abstract attributes, but of concrete facts. Jehovah was God—not Baal, Ashtaroth, idols, and enthroned powers of nature. But idols have perished, and all the famed gods of antiquity are but as dreams at daybreak.

In Christendom, for ages, men have gone on discussing the unity of God, but now it is an idea of unity unborn when Moses lived; it is modern, abstract—the child of philosophy. This is proper enough. But is it right to lay this modern view back upon the ancient, as if they were one and identical, and to employ the words of the archaic to clinch the ideas of the recent arguments?

The New Testament records the presentation to men of a person who differed from his fellow-men by such transcendent excellence that his disciples worshiped him, and after his death paid divine honors to him—exalted to the heavenly sphere. Was this person privy to such results in the minds of his disciples? Did he employ language which naturally favored the impression, not that he was an uncommon man, but really divine? Did he present himself to them in such aspects and relations as must inevitably have fascinated their imaginations, thralled their affections, and drawn from them that homage and devotion which men should render only to God?

To argue the divinity of Christ from his creative acts, from his participation in moral government, from implied or direct claims made by him to divinity, will not be without a Scripture warrant. But while it will be *a* scriptural method, it will not be *the* scriptural method—peculiar, simple, and original—by which Christ's godship is presented in the New Testament.

An argument for the divinity of Christ derived from his relations, now and hereafter, to the human soul, will approach nearest to the genius of the Gospels.

May the soul yield itself without reserve to the guidance of Christ? May it bestow upon him its affection without measure? May its love kindle the imagination till his pictured greatness and excellence draw forth a profound reverence and a rapturous homage? May man call upon his soul, and all that is within him, to laud and magnify the name of Christ, until it is set above every other name, and not below the very name of God?

This will be an argument for the divinity of Christ drawn from the human soul, and which will be new in every age, and which will never change with progressing philosophies or new civilizations. And it will have this pre-eminent advantage over all other methods, that it will not be more an argument than an experience; that it will carry practice with reasoning; that it will convince from moral experience more than from a mere championship of ideas. As there can be no argument of chemistry in proof of odors like a present perfume itself; as the shining of the stars is a better proof of their existence than the figures of an astronomer; as the restored health of his patients is a better argument of skill in a physician than labored examinations and certificates; as the testimony of the almanac that summer comes with June is not so convincing as is the coming of summer itself in the sky, in the air, in the fields, on hill and mountain; so the power of Christ upon the human soul is to the soul evidence of his divinity, based upon a living experience, and transcending in conclusiveness any convictions of the intellect alone, founded upon a contemplation of mere ideas, however just and sound.

If Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God in the experience of those who trust and love him, there needs no farther argument of his divinity. The whole interest of the question centres and exhausts itself in the question of

man's salvation. Curiosity, and even philosophy, may task itself with insoluble questions, with the quantitive argument, with the argument from divine relations to nations and to governments, but the one question with every earnest, thoughtful mind will be, *May I love and worship Christ with all my heart, and mind, and soul?*

In this spirit I shall present some considerations adapted to settle and comfort those who desire to believe in the divinity of Christ, but are moved with fear lest they shall derogate from the honor due to God by according to a creature that worship which belongs to God alone.

1. We have said that Christianity is Christ. We do not mean that it is the history of his life, the record of his deeds, and the statement of the truths which he left to the world. Christianity has its ethical system, its didactic truths, its history and place in time. But these are only the body, the members, through which its soul acts. A living person stands in the midst of these truths, himself the grandest truth, the grandest fact. While Christ excelled all teachers in the breadth and richness of his moral instruction, the most striking difference between him and all other teachers was the *personal allegiance* which he demanded to himself. He urged himself upon men as the embodiment of truth, and demanded of his followers not simply an assent to his doctrines, but the interweaving of their lives with his. Plato and Socrates have been often mentioned as the greatest teachers of men. Imagine Socrates standing in Athens, even when men were most affected by him, and, amid influences the most propitious, saying to his followers, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Or imagine Plato, when, in some favored day, he had carried up his disciples with great enthusiasm by his discourse, saying, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the

light of life." These are not sentences flashing from the extreme excitement of some rapturous moment. They are specimens of Christ's manner. They run through all his discourses. As his end drew nigh, and the minds of his disciples were more open, the frequency and boldness with which he presented himself as the epitome of truth, as the source of spiritual life in heaven, as the object of supreme trust, as the only authentic conception of God, as the exclusive way and door, must have struck every attentive reader. Listen to his conversation with Philip. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, Show us the Father?" The passage is remarkable not only for the grandeur with which he claimed to stand for God, but it is conclusive that this personal presentation of himself was habitual from the beginning of his ministry, or why that question of rebuke and surprise, "Have I *been so long time with you*, . . . and yet how sayest thou, then, *Show us the Father?*"

The apostles afterward entered fully into this view. They never presented Christianity, but always Christ. They never assumed or implied that the truths which Christ taught were enough for salvation. The whole tenor and spirit of their instruction was, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.*" They did not seek for disciples to a school of morality, or of religion, or of philosophy; it was a personal allegiance which they every where demanded. Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!—that was their purpose.

To accept Christ was, of course, to accept his teachings. But no man could accept his teachings, and yet reject a personal savior. By every form of identification was this personal relation manifested. Men took on the name of their prince. They were baptized, not in their own name, but into Christ's name, as if they had passed into a new family rela-

tion. The whole record of the feelings of the apostles is in the spirit of a divine hero-worship. Let Paul's language stand for all: "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

It is incontrovertible that the New Testament idea of piety is not simply a good life, with sound belief, *but that it is a personal union with the Lord Jesus Christ.* From such a vital sympathy and unity will flow the whole train and sequence of moral and religious experiences. But Christ is the First; Christ is the Last; Christ is the Author and Finisher of faith. Not a single step has been taken in Christianity until men have come into personal allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. If now we examine the aspects in which this person is presented, the claims which he makes, the natural effects which must inevitably flow from the performance of what he commands, it will become plain that, if it be wrong to worship Christ, the whole Gospel scheme is exquisitely adapted to mislead every susceptible and worshiping nature, and to entrap them into idolatry.

The child Jesus was surrounded with such portents as brought upon him the expectant eyes of all who knew him. His manhood did not discredit the expectations of men. His intelligence placed him at once at the head of teachers. After a few trials of debate, the wisest men of his nation, skilled in debate, relinquished all farther attempts to measure words with him. His reputation for purity and goodness equaled his wisdom. He manifested extraordinary insight of the human heart, and singular power in reading it. Wherever he went the whole community was moved. Such was the popular excitement which followed his steps that it became necessary for him to hide from men, and to enjoin silence upon the recipients of his beneficence. Men of deeply religious and earnest natures, like Nicodemus, sought him with rever-

ence; the common people sought him with curiosity; and the wicked and wretched sought him with hope. More striking than his wonders or his wisdom was this power of exciting among the vile a profound yearning for purity. Parents ran to him with their sick; men came as to a natural judge with their disputes in business. Women of a foreign tongue brought their daughters tormented with evil spirits for exorcism, and Roman officers bowed reverently to this remarkable person, although they heartily despised the enslaved nation from which he sprang.

These impressions of the multitude were heightened by an extraordinary control of nature. The winds, at his command, were still; the boisterous sea sank down to quiet. When he spoke, new powers were developed in natural causes: clay healed blindness; water cured leprosy. Diseases of every kind, and in uncountable numbers, were healed at his word. A few loaves of bread fed thousands of hungry people, still increasing as it was broken and distributed. The dead were restored to life again. There was no doubt whatever as to the reality of these acts. That miracles were wrought was never disputed, not even by shrewd enemies, lying in wait to destroy him. The power was admitted; the origin and source of the power alone were questioned. He said that it was divine, and an evidence of his superior mission. His enemies said that it was infernal, and a token that he was leagued with the devil.

This extraordinary power could not but raise in the minds of his disciples the most exalted opinion of their Master. And when, on one occasion, upon Mount Tabor, they saw him transfigured, hanging in the air before them like a star, and, surrounded with glorious light, in converse with celestial spirits, is it strange that they fully believed him to be divine? and that there was every probability that they would, unless cautioned and restrained, worship him?

Consider then the language and conduct toward his disciples of one so eminent in wisdom, so extraordinary in pow-

er, and so fascinating in manner and influence. He is not known even once to have cautioned them against an idolatrous affection. But he did continuously exert upon them influences, and address to them language which could have but one tendency, and that to kindle enthusiastic affection, and boundless reverence and worship. He declared that he came from God; that he and the Divine Father were one; that the surest method of knowing and worshiping the Father was to know and love him, his Son. He declared himself empowered to forgive sin, and to inspire a new life in all who would love him. He depicted his own affection for them in language whose tenderness and dignity have never been equaled. Such was his love for them that it had driven him from above; that it had animated his earthly career; that it was leading him to a shameful and dreadful death, which he would not shun.

But he declared that death itself was to be but a short absence from them, while he was gone to prepare a place in paradise, "that where I am there ye may be also."

No literal language could enough convey his idea of the intensity and entireness of that love which he gave and sought in return. He therefore employed figures. He declared that their life depended upon him; that he was the light; that he was the bread of life, the water of life; that his very flesh was their food, and his blood their drink. He declared that he was their master, and yet their servant. So wholly were they dependent upon him that he was their way, along which their feet came to walk as upon a road, and he stood between them and life eternal as a door or gate in a city between strangers without and citizens within. He declared that he watched over, tended, guarded, and led them as a shepherd does his flock.

And then, in describing the effects which he desired their love to produce in them—the intimacy and entireness of it—he declared that they were to grow out of him as a branch out of a vine; while, on the other hand, he would enter into

them as one does into his house, and dwell with them, and that this intimacy between them should be of the same kind as that which existed between himself and the father, and that it should be constant and perpetual—a secret inspiration, a pure joy, an unfailing strength on earth, and the earnest and presage of endless felicity in the world to come!

With all these ecstatic words in their hearts, the disciples beheld this Singular Being arrested, tried with circumstances of indignity, and condemned unjustly, while the compromising magistrate declared that he "found no fault in him." They saw his calmness, his fortitude, and his disinterestedness in these scenes of excitement and peril. They beheld him toiling under his own cross; they heard the muffled strokes of the hammer as he was nailed to it; they saw the cross lifted up, and their Master with it, while, to add every indignity to the cruelty, two thieves were crucified with him—an unconscious symbol of his work—the highest dying for and with the lowest—God united to man in weakness, that man might be lifted up to God by his strength! When the agony was over, and the three days of burial, he came again to them, bearing about with him a certain unworldly aspect. But no change was there in the demands for their love and service. He commanded them to dedicate their lives to his Name, to make that universal which he had addressed to them personally, to go forth to every nation and declare to all mankind those truths of God's love and mercy, through Jesus Christ. And then, while he yet spoke, he rose up slowly before them and disappeared, as a star goes out in the growing light of morning!

"AND THEY WORSHIPED HIM, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."* Did they sin in *worshiping* the Lord Jesus Christ? After their long career of intimacy, did love to such a being, who had exhausted the symbolism of life to express his life-giving relations to them; with every conceivable incitement to reverence and worship; with love, wonder, joy,

* Luke, xxiv., 52.

and gratitude kindling their imaginations toward him; without a solitary word of caution lest they should be snared by their enthusiasm, and bestow upon him the worship which belonged only to God, did they sin in worshiping Christ? If they did, was not Christ himself the tempter? If they did not, may not every loving soul worship him? Is there any other question of divinity that man need be troubled about but a divinity which the soul may worship, and on which it may rely for salvation?

Let me place another case before you for judgment. A maiden, the daughter of a prince, has wandered from her father's house, and has lapsed from virtue, seeking pleasure in ways every year more degrading. A noble youth appears among her gross companions, not to partake in their orgies, but with a gentle grace and eloquent persuasion to inspire an ambition of better things. To her he brings her father's importunity. Drawn to him by all that is attractive in pure manhood, she is met with more than encouragement—with sympathy, with tenderness, with expressions of love so exquisite, so new, so eloquent, that her soul dies in her with a sense of unworthiness. But he comforts and encourages her. "Because I live thou shalt live also." And when she fears to weary him, and seeks alone to find her upward way, he whispers, "Not without me, for without me you can do nothing." When the returning power of habits conquered but not subdued drives her to despair, he reillumines hope, saying, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world, and you shall also." And then, amid blushing flowers, he pours the tide of love in strange words that thrill the heart and fascinate the imagination. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Come to me in every hour of trial, and I will give thee rest. Grow to me, and mingle my life with your own, as the branch derives its life from the vine. Thy heart is my home; I will dwell there. Not God and his dearest ones are more united than I and thou."

By all these words, by all this love, by all these hopes, by

the ineffable joy of his presence, by his noble example and his unwearied teachings, by the inspiration of his life, and the lifting power of his soul put beneath hers, she comes back to virtue and womanhood, and with sacred ardor turns to him who has saved her, to love him with a love that leaves nothing unmingled in it, that carries up with it the dew from every flower that blossoms in her heart! What if he sternly shuts her opening heart, and puts away the reverence of her love and the devotion of her soul, saying, "Give these to your father. It is wicked to bestow them upon me!" If it be wicked to love, what is it to have deliberately inspired such love, and then to refuse it?

And shall I follow Christ through all my life; behold his beauty; twine about him every affection; lean upon him for strength; behold him as my leader, my teacher; feed upon him as my bread, my wine, my water of life; see all things in this world in that light which he declares himself to be—in his strength vanquish sin, draw from him my hope and inspiration, wear his name and love his work, and through my whole life, at his command, twine about him every affection, die in his arms, and awake with eager upspring to find him whom my soul loveth, only to be put away with the announcement that he is not the recipient of worship! Well might I cry out in the anguish of Mary in the garden, "They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him."

It is impossible to fulfill the commands of Christ and not be carried into worship. Not texts and arguments, but the laws of mind and the nature of the soul rise up to argue him divine.

If I may rest my being on him; if I may feel that he has suffered for my sins, that he has borne my sorrows, and that my life is grafted into his; and if I may pour out every thing in me of thought, and zeal, and worship toward him—then, blessed be God for Christ! But if it is wicked for me to do these things, then I can not thank God for him. God should

not have added to the misery of our condition by giving us such a being, and then make it wicked for us to worship him.

But I am not afraid to worship Christ! I will trust myself to worship him. I will trust those dearest to me to worship him. In the arms of Christ's love nothing shall hurt you. Love on, trust on, worship fearlessly! Let go your most ardent devotions toward him. There is no divine jealousy. The anxieties that afflict the sons of earth in their ideas of God never exist in heaven. Christ is the soul's bread—eat, ye that hunger! He is the water of life—drink, ye that thirst! He is the soul's end—aim at him! He is the soul's supreme glory—yield to every outgush of joy, of enthusiasm of worship that springs up in your heart toward him! Those that are in heaven bow down before him, and ascribe "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Let us not fear to do the same!

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

When two souls come together, and unite with each other, no one has a right to meddle with them, to know their most blessed intercourse, or to interpret their thoughts to each other. They are to be let alone. And when a soul goes up in the enthusiasm of its affianced love to unite itself to Jesus Christ, shall not its trust be respected? Shall any thing separate it from him? No, nothing. It is God that surrounds us; it is the eternal Father that rejoices in us; and at no time does he rejoice in us more than when we are giving our life and our being to Jesus Christ our Savior.

This morning, then, dear Christian brethren, let us renew the testimonies of our love and confidence toward this ascended One. If there be those present who, though they do not bear the same ecclesiastical name and relationship which we do, by faith bear the same relationship to Christ which we bear, hoping in him, trusting him, loving him, taking him to be their soul's Savior, and who desire to unite with us today in the celebration of the Last Supper of Christ, we cordially invite them to remain after the blessing is pronounced, and participate in this joyous festival.

V.

The Gentleness of God.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, October 9th, 1859.

The Gentleness of God.

"Now I, Paul, myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."
—2 Cor., x., 1.

Among all the motives which (in turn) are addressed to men, in dissuasion from evil and persuasion to good, none seems more impressive and touching than that of God's generosity. Authority, command, sublime threatening, sentence, and judicial penalty—all these seem natural to supremacy. But personal kindness, tenderness of feeling, gentleness, and benignity, as motives to obedience, are not possible under constitutional governments, which are not governments by arbitrary monarchs, but of laws and constitutions—abstract and without feeling. The divine government, on the contrary, is personal. In human governments men represent institutions and laws. Exactly the reverse is true in the divine government: laws and institutions represent a person—God.

In an argument designed to authenticate his apostolic claims as an authoritative teacher of the Gospel of Christ, Paul employs the divine feelings as a powerful motive. He lays great stress upon *the meekness and gentleness of Christ.* And this is the theme of my discourse this morning—the gentleness of Christ!

Gentleness is not a separate and distinct faculty. It is the method by which strength manifests itself. Softness and tenderness from want of strength constitute weakness, not gentleness. Nothing can be less influential than kindness springing from imbecility. That kind of gentleness which springs from weakness increases as things approach zero.

Gentleness is not, then, the mere absence of rude vigor. It is the softness and tenderness of vigor and great power. It, is sweet in the degree in which it is the attribute or the fruit of power, and in the degree in which it springs from authority and dignity. The greater the power of the being, the greater will be the marvel and the delicacy of gentleness. In a woman we expect gentleness. We are shocked by its absence rather than surprised by its presence. But in a warrior we scarcely expect it, and, therefore, it creates an admiration that it does not in woman.

It is wonderful, too, in proportion to the provocation to contrary feelings. That beauty should beget admiration, that goodness should attract benignity, that purity should find the face of God reflected from its tranquil surface, as the sun from still and silent lakes, does not surprise us. But that all rude, and vulgar, and hateful things should find themselves, at one time or another, the subjects of a true and divine gentleness, this is surprising.

Gentleness, likewise, is wonderful in proportion to the moral sensibility and discriminating purity of the mind which exercises it. Divine moral indifference would extract all merit and efficacy from goodness and gentleness. If God were gentle to sinful men simply because he cared nothing for moral character, and because indifference were easier to himself, gentleness would then be an inflection of indolence and selfishness, and would neither produce surprise nor admiration. Gentleness, springing from easy good-nature, which will not take the trouble to vindicate justice and right, will not command even respect.

That goodness which worldly men ascribe to God, that they may presume upon it and abuse it, is simply the absence of moral sensibility, and not voluntary and intelligent kindness. It is much more an indifference to sin than a positive, painstaking love. But a divine kindness and a divine goodness, springing from indifference to evil, and from an easy good-nature which makes it, on the whole, rather pleas-

anter to shine on in unobservant indolence than to frown upon evil, would take the tone out of all government, and respect from the hearts of all subjects.

Consider, then, with these qualifying and interpreting remarks, what must be the nature of gentleness in God. He dwells alone from eternity to eternity because there is none other that can be of his proportion and of his grandeur of being. Supreme by his own nature, supreme by the acclamation of heaven, but also supreme simply because he is more than all else, being the cause of every thing! There is none with whom he can take counsel. All powers of nature are but the commonest servants of God. Tornadoes, and earthquakes, and fire, and air, and water, are but his servants that do his errands. Nor is there an angel in heaven, or human being on earth, nor are there spirits of just men made perfect above, to whom he does not stoop down, through infinite degrees, when he communicates his thoughts. And who among them can advise and counsel with God, since their light is but his own reflected light? They throw back to the sun only that which they take from it! Self-sustained, and pouring out from the fountain of his own life into the souls of all created intelligences, as oil is poured into lamps, how wonderful is his greatness! How vast is he, and how superior to all others! His vast movements are along the circuits of eternity. The whole earth is said to be but a drop of the bucket before him. What must that ocean-universe be, of which this earth is but a single drop?

Did you ever, in a summer's day, when you had drawn from the bottom of the well the cool water to slake your thirst, stand, and dream, and gaze at a drop orbed and hanging at the bucket's edge, and reflecting the light of the sun? What the rounded form and size of that drop is, in comparison with the whole earth itself, that the round earth itself is in comparison with God's majesty and immensity of being! And that such a One, living in such a wise—so far above the earth, so far above its inhabitants, so far above the

noblest spirit that stands in the unlost purity of heaven—that such a One should deal with his erring children with a gentleness and patience such as characterizes the administration of God toward man, is wonderful and sublime!

Consider, not alone the greatness of God's absolute being, and his gentleness as a being of infinite strength, but also his moral purity and his love of purity, his goodness and his love of goodness, and his abhorrence of evil. But how shall we measure these things?

God has left the impress of his genius upon the natural world in such a way that if we know how to read it aright, this globe contains indications of the truths that Scripture itself develops. These truths, however, are not to be first learned from nature; they are to be recognized in nature after Scripture has unfolded them to us.

Now all over the world the repugnance of nature to the violation of her appointed laws is patent and familiar. I do not like to think that the arrangements of nature are the result of a cold calculation on the part of God, or of a deliberate conclusion on his part that they are needful. I think, rather, that certain things in nature express the very elements of God's mind, as it were, without design. Nature is saturated, so to speak, with God. She bears in her structure the feelings and disposition of the divine Creator, as a picture bears in its parts the feelings and disposition of the man who painted it, or as Christ's face expressed his feelings of love, pity, and authority. Nature is full of indications of divine attributes. Natural law, through all time, and round the world, conveys hints and germs of heaven, of hell, of vicarious suffering, and of remedial mercy. It teaches these four things. Disobey and suffer, obey and enjoy; these are its first and fundamental lessons, which are the rude seed-forms of those higher truths: purity and heaven, impurity and hell. Then throughout the world we see illustrations of the fact that one man can suffer for another. In the mother's suffering, and in the father's watch and care, the child grows

out of impurity and rudeness into purity and gentleness. Vicarious suffering is a law of the household and of society. It is one of the eternal truths of God's nature. Remedial mercy is also a truth which nature hints. In the natural world, within certain bounds, a man's wrong-doing may be repaired, if he turn from his transgression and repent. There is provision for every bone to knit together again when fractured, for every muscle to heal when lacerated, and for every nerve, when shattered and diseased, to return again to health. Thus in nature we see prefigured the great scheme of redemption. Purity gives heaven; impurity eternal wail and woe. But there is vicarious suffering to bring men from the one to the other. If through Christ there be repentance and turning from evil, there is also health and restoration. And these things are indicated in nature—when we know how to see them there—but are authoritatively taught only in the New Testament. In nature they are as twilight, while in the Gospel they glow with noonday brightness.

Now this I understand to be an infusion into nature of a testimony to God's moral sensibility. He is not a being to whom all things are alike. He is not a being to whom all conduct is but the manifestation of so many instincts, or but the inevitable working out of laws that necessitate human action. God has given, through the natural world, indications that he regards some things as right and beautiful, and some things as wrong and hateful; some things as worthy to be crowned, and some things as deserving to be punished.

Now what is the interpretation of these indications of God's disposition in nature? If you would understand them, you must go to the Scriptures. Listen, then, to the words of God through his servant Moses, as recorded in the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus, beginning with the fifth verse:

"And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in good-

ness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

Again, listen to the words of God which he spake, under circumstances scarcely less momentous, by the mouth of the same servant, as recorded in the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, beginning with the thirty-ninth verse:

"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land and to his people."

Do these words interpret a God of moral indifference? Do they not, rather, reveal a God sensitive to every pulsation of right or wrong—a God affected with admiration and gladness by every thing that looks toward virtue, and truth, and holiness; and aroused to a moral repugnance and judicial abhorrence by every thing that looks toward corruption, and selfishness, and wickedness? God stands between the right and the wrong, not looking pleasantly on the one, and equally pleasantly on the other—not looking, as the sun looks, with a benignant face on the evil and on the good, and not as man looks—with only a less benignant face upon the evil! He stands with all the fervor of his infinite love, and all the majesty of his unlimited power, approving good, and legislating for it; disapproving evil and abhorring it, legislating

against it and bringing it into infamy and under eternal penalty. If there be one truth that speaks throughout the Bible like the voice of God, and resounds through all nature with all the grandeur of divine intonation, it is the truth that God does not look with an equal eye upon the evil and the good; that he is a discriminator of character, a lover of that which is right, and a hater of that which is wrong.

God's sensibility is exceedingly acute. We are accustomed to connect fineness and acuteness of feeling with delicacy and subtleness of organization; and we are apt to think that as God is a being so vast that his latitude is infinity and his longitude is eternity, he must be comparatively insensitive—less sensitive than men are. But he is more sensitive than men can possibly be. Sensitiveness is a peculiarity of his nature. Because he is vaster than men there is no reason why he should not be more sensitive than they. Divinity does not consist in bulk, but in quality. He is exquisitely sensitive to the finest shades of character. He has an infinite relish for, and sensibility to that which is good in the soul, and he has a corresponding hatred for, and abhorrence toward that which is evil in the soul. . . . . .

That a being such as this, who is independent of all other beings; who has made them all; who, by the mere act of his will, can obliterate them; who can rub them out easier than I can rub out the colors from the butterfly's wing; who is full of infinite creative resources, with the power alike to crush this earth to atoms and make it over again easier than the potter can mould again an unburnt earthen vessel after he has dashed it in pieces—that such a being, who is in nowise obliged to study economies; who is unbounded in thought, unbounded in skill, unbounded in wisdom, and unbounded in power; who has all eternity in which to mark out his pictures and build his architectures, and who, with all his vastness, is extremely sensitive to moral qualities, so that he cherishes the most ardent love for that which is good, and the intensest hatred for that which is evil—that such a being should

carry himself with care, with quiet, with softness, with delicacy, with gentleness toward men, and toward those, too, who have, by their conduct, forfeited all claim to mercy and gentleness — this *is* wonderful! That the eternal Father, who forbids us to look upon the sun and say "thou art my god," or to look upon the moon and stars and say "ye are my gods," and who disdains with infinite scorn to be represented by the chisel of the sculptor or by the pencil of the painter—that he should carry himself with exceeding tenderness and patience toward us erring creatures, and say, "A bruised reed I will not break, and smoking flax I will not quench, till I send forth judgment unto victory"—this is a miracle surpassing all wonders.

"A bruised reed shall he not break." Is there any thing that grows so high, carrying up so little strength of stem, as the reed that rises twenty or thirty feet in the air, and has a stalk not larger than my finger? Now a beast, breaking through the thicket, eager, with his unquenched thirst, for the cooling draught, strikes against the slender reed, shattering it, so that it has but just strength to sustain its own weight. So weak is it that if there be so much wind as to lift one of its leaves, or to bend it in the least degree in either direction, it must surely break. But God says, "My gentleness is such that when I go down among men whose condition is like that of a bruised reed, I will do nothing to complete their overthrow, but will deal with them in such a way that they shall gather strength, till I have sent forth judgment unto victory."

"And smoking flax shall he not quench." If the flame is just dying out in a lamp, it is not in danger of being suddenly extinguished, for the old warmth in the wick serves for a time to nourish and sustain it. But immediately after the wick is lighted, and before any warmth is communicated to it, the least movement is sufficient to extinguish it. God says, "Wherever there is a spark of grace lighted in the soul, if it flickers so that the breath of the person who carries

it, or the least motion of his hand, is in danger of putting it out, I will deal so gently with him as not to quench that spark. I will treat it with such infinite tenderness that it shall grow into a flame which will burn on forever." And these are the symbols by which God measures his wonderful gentleness.

Now with a conception before your mind of what God is in his moral aptitudes and discriminations, as well as what he is in his infinity, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, consider what tax he has had on his patience and his forbearance, and what his gentleness must be in the light of human provocations.

The life of every individual is a long period of moral delinquency. No one who has not had the experience of a parent can have any adequate conception of the patience and gentleness exercised even by a mother in rearing her child, from the cradle to the door of the world, when, at twenty-one years of age, he goes forth from her care. It is only after-experience that can give the child a true idea of how much the mother bore with him, and how much kindness, and love, and forbearance, and generosity, and delicacy, and gentleness she showed toward him during his passage from infancy to manhood. True mothers are God's miniatures in this world; and we see portrayed in them, on a small scale, the very traits and delineations of that character which makes God the eternal Father of sinful men.

How great will be the disclosure which shall be made when, in the great day, Christ shall unroll from the archives of eternity the history of each individual soul, and make known what not even the watching mother saw, nor the wide-thinking father, and what not even the subject himself dreamed of! How great will be the disclosure which shall be made when Christ shall expose to view all the secret throbbings of every soul; all the jutting motives of his heart; all the thoughts and intents of his mind that never took form in action; all the acts that he has performed and

forgotten; and all the impulses of his interior life, upon which God has hung with close inspection, and which he has felt with all the sensibility of a heavenly Father's heart!

The history of any individual soul will appear far different when it is unrolled in the light of God's countenance from what it does when unrolled in the light of earthly considerations. If we could see a man as he is when developed and wrought upon by the whole mingled influence of human life, what a view should we behold! If we look upon a human being from below, and measure him by our own selfishness, and the notions that obtain in human society, we form what we consider to be a charitable judgment of him; that is, we do not scan his motives closely and judge him according to them, but we call him good without stopping to inquire what his real character is. God has no such charity as this. He sees every thing, and sees it just as it is, and measures it by immutable principles. Nothing pertaining to human conduct or character can escape his notice. When measured thus, what must be the character of that man who has passed through all the sinuous ways of life; who has been wrought upon by all the temptations of the world; who has been subjected to the multitudinous influences of society; and in whom have been at work, during the twenty, or fifty, or eighty years of his earthly existence, the various conflicting passions of his nature? When human life is looked at and judged through the eyes of God, how wonderful does it become, and how much patience must be exercised by the Divine Being in rearing a single one of his creatures!

Now consider, not individual life, great as that is, but national life. Consider that men perish at the rate of thirty millions a year; that in any one day ten hundred millions of men live on the face of the earth; that every man has a history complex, continuous, and almost infinite in detail; that these ten hundred millions of human souls are walking toward the door of darkness from life to death, or rather from life to life—consider these things, and then that, which

is marvelous as exercised toward an individual man, becomes transcendent and amazing when exercised toward the whole race and extended through all time! Consider that this has been taking place for six thousand recorded years, and in regard to this one globe; and that the divine administration toward mankind has been one not devoid, indeed, of the sword and flashing spear—not devoid of terrific justice; but that by nothing has it been more characterized than by God's forbearance, and long-suffering, and patience, and gentleness, and how wondrous do the qualities of the divine mind seem!

Consider what turmoil of nations there has been. Consider what have been the many and long-continued oppressions and wrongs that have been practiced by man upon man. Consider how God hates tyrants; and yet how almost every man that ever lived has been a petty tyrant. Consider how God hates underminings; and yet how men, the world over, are striving to undermine each other. Consider the jealousies, the hatred, the feculent vices, the hideous crimes, the degrading selfishness of national life.

Did you ever, of a hot afternoon, witness the contest of innumerable worms over a carrion carcass? Did you ever notice the greediness, and selfishness, and quarrelsomeness displayed by the actors in a scene like that? And yet such a contest is decent compared with the gigantic contest that has been carried on for thousands of years by the vermicular human race, and God has looked upon it, dwelt and pondered over it, and carried it in his heart; and all this time he has not ceased to pour out upon the world, in rich abundance, the blessings of his never-failing love!

Think how poor has been the best part of human life; how slow has been the growth of the moral element; how rudely developed it is even now; how, the moment that any great element of power in human society has been well developed, it has almost invariably turned around and served the lower nature of man; how wealth, when acquired, has

dominated for the passions; how learning, when it came to be, in some measure, free from the husk and shuck in which it grew, became the ready servant of ambition and selfishness; how, when art began to shine, it was employed for the embellishment of vice, and as the instrument of untold wrongs, and how imperfect the world is, notwithstanding all its advancement, whether viewed in its individual or national character! Remember that God has, with infinite patience, night and day, watched over and nourished this groaning world through all the thousands of years that it has been travailing in pain.

Consider the events which have marked the long line of history; reflect upon the number, and succession, and cruelty of wars. For I believe that from the beginning of the world one war has not gone out before some fiendish hand has seized the brand from its smouldering heap and kindled a new one, so that war has touched and kindled war in an unbroken succession through all time. There is nothing else that begins to compare in cruelty with the human race. Sharks are merciful, and lions and serpents are angelic compared with men. Man is the chief monster that the earth ever bred.

Consider what despotisms have inflicted their dominations, their outward violence and injury, their inward cruelty, and their corrupting influences upon the world. Consider what slavery has done, what barbaric savagery it has brought upon a large portion of the human race.

These things are done before God, who looks upon every part of the human family as his own. How should you feel if you were to enter the room where your child is sleeping, and find upon it a stealthy cat, stationed at the portal of life, and stopping its very breath? How should you feel were you to find upon your child a vampire that had fastened into its flesh his blood-sucking bill, and was fast consuming its vitality? How do you feel when one of your children tramples upon another? or when your neighbor's children

crush yours? or when ruffian violence strikes against those whose hearts forever carry the core of your heart?

Judge from your own feelings how God, with his infinite sensibility, must feel when he sees men rising up against their fellow-men; performing gross deeds of cruelty on every hand; waging wars that cause blood to flow like rivers throughout the globe: when, in short, he sees them devastating society by every infernal mischief that their ingenuity can invent.

The Bible says that God is past finding out. But it does not merely mean that his physical power is past finding out. It is his disposition—his moral nature, that are peculiarly beyond research and measurement. The unsearchableness of the love of God in Christ Jesus; the greatness, the grandeur, and the glory of the heart that, hating iniquity with an intense hatred, can love the doer of it, and that, abhorring sin with an infinite abhorrence, can give itself to save the sinner—these are the things that are past finding out. The marvel of meekness, and sweetness, and love in the arch-thunderer of eternity—this it is that is past finding out!

If God cared for the misconduct of men no more than we do for the fiery strifes of an ant-hill, there would be no foundation for such a conception of divine gentleness and divine goodness. There are some who seem to think that God, when he created men and placed them in the world, set on foot an experiment; that he does not care what they do, but that he is satisfied to let them act as they choose, and see what they will come to. Let them have such an idea of God! I will have none of it! If God in moral elements were a sun shining on the good and on the evil just alike, as he does in his physical administration, we could not have the view of him which I have been presenting; but he is the righteous judge of all the earth. He is the eternal author and lover of equity. Listen to what he himself says in the fiftieth Psalm:

"Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to de-

clare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; *thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself;* but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

Is this the language of one that does not care what men do? If God regarded human conduct as a mere matter of present good or evil, and was content to let things work out their own way, fixing his eye mainly on the great future, the attributes of gentleness and goodness, as belonging to his nature, would not shine forth with that unspeakable grandeur which they now have; but he "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Evil is eternal in the sight of God, unless it be checked and cured. Sin, like a poisonous weed, re-sows itself, and becomes eternal by reproduction. Now God looks upon the human race in the light of these truths. And tell me what other attribute of God, what other inflection of his character, is so sublime as this—his gentleness? How wonderful has been its duration; how deep its nature; how exquisite its touches; how rich its fruit! What assurance does it bring to our hope! How boundless is the scope it opens to our eye! How wonderful is the combination of traits in his disposition! It was because the lion and the lamb first lay down together in the heart of God that the prophet declared that they shall yet do it on earth.

Now, while these statements are fresh in your mind, and your imagination glows, and your affections are warm, I de-

sire to present to you a clear conception of God as your *personal* God. They who are accustomed to present God almost entirely through the ideas of law as an official, gubernatorial personage, have produced upon the minds of multitudes the disastrous effect of substituting a mere abstraction for a living, glowing personality. Much as I may esteem theologians, and much as I believe in and admire a great deal that they say or write, yet against such a mode of presenting God my soul kindles in the proportion in which I myself do love the Savior, and in the measure of the desire that I have to lead men to him. If sometimes I have seemed to tread down, rudely, opinions that have hitherto been reverently held, it has not been so much from disrespect, as from an eagerness to brush away and to destroy every thing that lifts itself up between the soul of man and a living Savior.

From all the human passions there have risen up vapors densely concealing the face of God as clouds hide the sun. All the active world, too, by its unhallowed forms of pleasure, by its ambitions, by its mighty whirl of business, by its sweltering strifes, has joined to exclude from men any heart-saving conception of God; and it has always seemed to me too much that religious men should inadvertently increase this very mischief, and so present God as to make a conception of him by ordinary men impossible, or possible only in a way that shall take all influence from the thought of him.

Not long ago there was a researcher of art in Italy, who, reading in some book that there was a portrait of Dante painted by Giotto, was led to suspect that he had found where it had been placed. There was an apartment used as an outhouse for the storage of wood, hay, and the like. He sought and obtained permission to examine it. Clearing out the rubbish, and experimenting upon the whitewashed wall, he soon detected the signs of the long-hidden portrait. Little by little, with loving skill, he opened up the sad, thoughtful, stern face of the old Tuscan poet.

Sometimes it seems to me that thus the very sanctuary

of God has been filled with wood, hay, and stubble, and the divine lineaments of Christ have been swept over and covered by human plastering, and I am seized with an invincible desire to draw forth from its hiding-place, and reveal to men the glory of God as it shines in the face of Christ Jesus! It matters little to me what school of theology rises or what falls, so only that Christ may rise and appear in all his Father's glory, full-orbed, upon the darkness of this world! It matters little to me what Church comes forth strong or what becomes weak, so only that the poor, the sinful, the neglected, the lost among men, may have presented to them, in the Church, a Savior accessible and available in every hour of temptation, of remorse, or of want!

It is this Christ that I would make personal to you to-day. He is not a being that dwells in the inner recesses of the eternal world, inaccessible, incomprehensible. He is not the stern king, unbending, upon a throne of justice, lifted up above the reach of sighs and soul-wants. He is not as one fortified behind the bulwarks of law, so that we must cannonade, and breach the walls with prayers, and then rush in to take him captive. Men never find Christ, but are always found of him. He goes forth to seek and to save the lost. It is not the outreaching of our thought, it is not the abstraction of our heart, it is not the strong drawing of our sympathy and yearning that brings him to us. It is the abounding love of his heart that draws us up toward him. His love precedes ours. "We love him because he first loved us." We kindle our hearts at his. As the sun is up before the sluggard, so the twilight and dawn of his love is upon the hills when we wake; and when we sleep, even, his thoughts burn above us as the stars burn through the night.

It is this willing, winning, pleading Christ, who wields all the grandeur of justice and all the authority of universal empire with such sweet gentleness that in all the earth there is none like unto him, that I set before you as your personal friend. He knows each of you better than your

mother knew you. He has called you by name. In your households you are not so familiar to your most cherished friend as you are to the heart of Christ. Not so indelibly is your name recorded in your father's memory, or in the baptismal register of the sanctuary, or in the family Bible, where the tabular leaf for births holds your infant name, as upon the ever-remembering heart of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He does not set his holiness and his hatred of sin like mountains over which you may not climb. He does not hedge himself about by the dignities and superiorities of divinity. All the way from his throne to your heart is sloped; and hope, and love, and patience, and meekness, and long-suffering, and kindness, and wonderful mercies, and gentleness, as so many banded helping angels, wait to take you by the hand and lead you up to God. And I beseech you by his gentleness, too, that you fear him no longer; that you be no longer indifferent to him; that you wound him by your unbelief no more, but that, now and henceforth, you follow him—"for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

But can any be saved except those who voluntarily and intelligently believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? *Most assuredly they can.* One half the human race die in infancy, before the child knows its right hand from its left, and is the blessed truth of their salvation to be annihilated? or, falling like sparks through the lurid air of hell, shall we believe that they burn forever? Does not universal Christendom believe that they go straight, in the bosom of angels, to their Father's kingdom? So do I believe. So would I believe if there were not another man on the face of the earth that thought so!

Yet they are too young to understand the name of Christ, or to believe in him. Their ear has never been formed to hear the very sound of his name. Yet, blessed be God, the salvation of Christ Jesus, that they could not understand on earth, shall greet them and glorify them in heaven! It is settled, then, that Christ saves men who have never heard of

him, and who can not hear. But has this salvation a wider scope than infant children? Are there any others who will experience the grace of him whom they never knew? Let those answer that seem to know so much, who have searched out God's whole government, and know all about it. I say again I do not know. I yearn, and hope, and long; but I do not know. As, in the case of infants, the benefit of Christ's atonement is applied to their unknowing souls, so I hope that there are earnest and conscientious men, to whom no gospel ever came, who will yet be made subjects of redemptive love. May we not hope that that which came to us through Jesus Christ, clear and disclosed as the noonday sun, may have fallen with reflex beams upon others before his day and since? And as we are led by the Morning Star or the Sun of Righteousness, may they not, at least, have had some twilight leading?

But for *you*, to whom the Gospel is preached; for you, upon whose cradle rested the dew of grace, and whose earliest years were made acquainted with the sacred name of Jesus —the children of pious parents, reared within sound of the sanctuary, never beyond the sound of a Sabbath bell; surrounded and hedged in by ten thousand influences of religion, persuading the understanding, importunate upon the conscience—for such as *you*, if Christ be rejected, there is no salvation! For those who never heard him; to whom no sweet sound of the Gospel ever came; whose week was one long rolling surge, unbroken by the tranquil shore of any Sabbath, and who, in this darkness and neglect, yet always groped upward, endeavoring to live a life better than their times, yearning and longing to know a better way—may we not hope, in the inscrutable mystery of divine wisdom, that there was some mode of applying to such the benefit of the death of Christ? that the vision rose, at last, upon their eye, cleansed from the films of flesh? and that among the myriad voices of heaven there are some from the heathen world, who, though on earth they could give no name to that after which

their souls yearned and searched, no sooner beheld the divine glory of the Savior than they cried out, "This is he for whom we have waited?" Yes, I firmly believe that it is by the power of Christ that every man is saved who shall touch the shore of heaven; but I am not authorized to say that God can not, in the sovereignty of his love, conduct men who are in darkness to that salvation which we reject, and give them a reflected light, at least, of that glory which shines full on us.

But for all those who have been clearly taught, who have been moved by their wicked passions deliberately to set aside him of whom the prophets spake, whom the apostles more clearly taught, whom the Holy Spirit, by the divine power, now makes known to the world through the Gospel—for them, if they reject their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. If they deliberately neglect, set aside, or reject their Savior, he will as deliberately, in the end, reject them.

Sometimes, in dark caves, men have gone to the edge of unspeaking precipices, and, wondering what was the depth, have cast down fragments of rock, and listened for the report of their fall, that they might judge how deep that blackness was; and listening—still listening—no sound returns; no sullen plash, no clinking stroke as of rock against rock—nothing but silence, utter silence! And so I stand upon the precipice of life. I sound the depths of the other world with curious inquiries. But from it comes no echo and no answer to my questions. No analogies can grapple and bring up from the depths of the darkness of the lost world the probable truths. No philosophy has line and plummet long enough to sound the depths. There remains for us only the few authoritative and solemn words of God. These declare that the bliss of the righteous is everlasting; and with equal directness and simplicity they declare that the doom of the wicked is everlasting.

And therefore it is that I make haste, with an inconceivable ardor, to persuade you to be reconciled to your God. I hold

up before you that God who loves the sinner and abhors the sin; who loves goodness with infinite fervor, and breathes it upon those who put their trust in him; who makes all the elements his ministering servants; who sends years, and weeks, and days, and hours, all radiant with benefaction, and, if we would but hear their voice, all pleading the goodness of God as an argument of repentance and of obedience. And remember that it is this God who yet declares that he will at last by no means clear the guilty! Make your peace with him now, or abandon all hopes of peace.

Be not discouraged because you are sinful. It is the very office of his love to heal your sins. Not, then, only when you have overcome them yourself is he prepared to receive you; it is his delight to give you help while in the very bitterness of wrestling with your sins. He is your pilot to lead you out of trouble. No pilot would he be who only then would take my ship when I had gone through the narrows, and could see the city, and was quite free of all danger. Who would need a physician if he might not come to his bedside until after the sickness was healed? What use of schoolmaster if one may not go to school till his education be complete? What hope of salvation if God would give us no help till the whole work of subduing the natural heart were completed? And our Savior is one who begins and completes in us the work of grace. He is the author of our faith, and the finisher of it. It is his power that works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. He comes to you when you are morally dead, and by his touch brings you to life. When you are weak, he inspires you with strength. When you are tempted, he opens the door of escape. When you are vanquished, he appears to lift you up and bind your wounds. Yea, bending under all our burdens, and loaded down with our own sins, behold that Christ of whom it is said, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep

have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

A great many of you have heard of the "terrors of the law;" you have heard of the divine threatenings, of the penalties to be visited upon the wicked; and as a man in a gale of wind draws his garments tighter about him, so you have drawn your pride more closely about you, and said, "I will not be driven by fear; I will not be flailed into heaven; I am too much of a man for that."

Now what are you going to do? When I come to you and preach gentleness, do you not say, "I will not be cozened either. It is of no use for you to try to play upon my feelings?" How *can* I persuade you, then? If all the motives that touch your conscience, your fear, your reason, and your affections, will not bring you to God, what motive can I present to you that will? Or do you count yourself unworthy of eternal life? Have you made up your mind that in no way shall God find you out? If all the motives that have been thrown around about you have failed to bring you to Christ, what is there that can bring you to him?

Perhaps you have not long to live. The nail is forged and the screw is made that shall hold down the lid of your coffin. The loom is built, and the thread is spun, and the shroud is woven that is to wrap some of your lifeless forms, and you almost feel the coolness of the air of the grave. You ought, without delay, to make your peace with God, and secure a hope of immortality. You have no time to lose! Death, that is always busy, is no less so now than it has been at any period in the past.

I know what your lives have been. I know what worm it is that makes those leaves yellow at the surface. I know the rock on which you are stumbling. I know the rod that is being lifted higher and higher to break you in pieces.

Dear friend, I must be faithful to your soul. You and I will meet, before long, at the judgment-seat of God. You shall not be left in doubt as to whether I think sin is damna-

ble. I stand here to speak the Word of God to you. I stand here to declare to every one of you that, whatever hope there may have been for men who lived before the Gospel was known upon earth, and whatever hope there may be for the heathen to whom the Gospel has not been carried, there is in the Gospel of Christ no hope and reversion for you to whom Christ has been preached, and to whom all the avenues of salvation have been opened, if, having counted the blood of the atonement an unholy thing, and having trampled it under your feet, you die unbelieving!

I surround you with the generosity of God. I take the radiant robe of Christ's love, more glorious than the sun, and throw it about you. I surround you with divine gentleness, and meekness, and mercy. Why should you be naked? Why should you be defiled? Why should you impotently strive to cover yourself with your own poor devices, when divine love would clothe you with light and glory? Will ye be eternally beggared in the presence of an infinite supply? Will ye wander eternally, homeless and lost, when your Father's house stands open, and all heaven cries to you "Come!"

PRAYER.

We draw near to thee, eternal Father. There is none to whom we can go but unto thee for such wants as we have. There is none that is wise enough for us if we seek each other's counsel. All men alike are ignorant. We understand but little of the world in which we live, and less of our own selves. We can not interpret the great courses of thy providence with which thou art administering human affairs. All before us is at best but twilight, and mostly darkness; but thou seest the end from the beginning, and art unerringly wise. We rejoice that thou dost think for us, that all our paths are laid by thee, and that all thy influences are with us and around us. Blessed are they that put their trust in the wisdom of God! We rejoice that we may draw near to thee, for of sympathy with men there is but little. We are drawn to our own way and work. We understand but little, and only that part of life which is cast up before us. Hidden thoughts;

wrestlings of the inward man; hopes and fears; the bitterness of grief and disappointment—these we can not perceive, nor bear for one another. And we rejoice that thou, O God, art a high priest that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. We may draw near to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and help in time of need, for our inmost thoughts are open before thee, and in thy gentleness, and loving-kindness, and grace thou art concerned with each one of us. There are none so remote, there are none so ignorant, there are none so humble or insignificant as to be beyond thy care and thought. Thou dost delight to descend to the humble and the contrite, and to dwell with such as are of a broken spirit. We rejoice that in our conflicts we are not left to our own power and will. Thou dost work mightily in us and upon us. We can not understand all the truth that there is in thy moral administration. We know that we have liberty; we know that we are responsible for the misuse of the power of choosing; and yet we know and feel that thou thyself dost love us through all laws and in the midst of all human liberties, and that thou dost, by the greatness and the fullness of thine own power, help our infirmities and feebleness of thought and volition, and overrule even things that we purpose and desire. We come to thee because thou art the source of supply for our understandings; for our religious life; for our affections; for our weakness; for our strength; for our joy; for our sorrow; for our troubles; for our frets and vexations; for all our moods and dispositions. Thou art a God that hast help, patience, and forgiveness. Thou hast succor and relief. Where can we find such a school-master or such a parent as thou art? We rejoice in the manifestations of thy goodness that have made us what we are. We rejoice that thy vengeance has been so slow, and that thou hast been long-suffering, and so unwilling that any should perish. It has been our salvation. There are some among us that have sinned so much, and so clearly and unmistakably, against our own education and convictions, and have covered our sins with so many other transgressions, and walked in so many ways that were forbidden of thee, and so disallowed our own judgment, that if thou hadst been strict with us we should have been cut off and swept away. Thy patience has saved us. Many of us have ignorantly lived in ways that led down toward destruction, and thou, O God, hast turned us away from them, hiding them, or blocking them up, that we might go no farther. And with tears, and wonder, we perceive that it is thy wisdom that has been our

salvation, and that we should have ruined ourselves hadst thou not interfered in our behalf. O God, on every side that we look we see how hasty we are, how we thrust forth our inexperience, how we trust our own strength and wisdom, that are but weakness and folly, and how we carry with ourselves, day by day, all the elements of self-destruction. And we recognize thy divine power. We look back to behold many instances of thy signal interposition. But we have beheld only a small portion of thee. It is only now and then that one of thy attributes is so obvious to us that we can see it. Every day is laden with God's forgiveness and forbearance. And how wonderful is thine administration! Thou art jealous for holiness; thou dost abhor iniquity; thou dost yearn for our love; thou dost desire our obedience; and yet thou art most patient and most gentle. We desire to be led by thy goodness to repentance. We would fain have that wicked heart taken away from us by which we have sinned. We would repent heartily of our transgressions, and turn away from them, and cast them far from us, and turn our face toward the New Jerusalem. We desire, O Lord, that we may have thy Spirit to help us, to guide us, to encourage us, to lift us up, and, when we fail, to strengthen us, till we appear in Zion and before God.

Accept our thanks that there are from time to time so many that are called of God, and that hear thy call and come to thee. Accept our thanks that there are so many that have begun the Christian life, and that day by day are overcoming evil habits, and are establishing habits that are good. We thank thee that thou art inspiring faith and hope so strongly in many and many a bosom, that thou art making them very powerful, and that more and more are being educated for the kingdom of thy glory.

Even so, O Lord Jesus, cease not thy work of love and compassion in our midst. Teach thy people how to pray and how to live, so that their life shall be a Gospel preached perpetually. And we pray that out of our families, out of our Sabbath-schools, out of our Bible-classes, out of all the circles wherein we live and labor, there may be continually gathered those that are being prepared for immortality. We thank thee that this people have been called to labor for thee not unsuccessfully. Prepare them for greater labors. And grant that we may sow abundantly, in order that we may reap abundantly.

Prepare us for the services of the evening—for the speaking of thy truth, and for the hearing of it. Grant that as

we meet from Sabbath to Sabbath, we may mark how we are coming nearer and nearer to that blessed Sabbath which shall never end, when the sanctified shall be gathered together, when we shall find our loved and lost ones, when they shall be given to us with immortality of love, and when, above all, we shall meet thee, O Lord God of our salvation! and we will give the praise to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

VI.

The Life of Christ,

Without and Within;

IN TWO SERMONS.

First, Christ Without.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, October 1st, 1865.

The Life of Christ:—Without.

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."—John, i., 4, 5.

We have all read of princes walking among their subjects in disguise; and there is a certain suggestion of contrast between the seeming and the real, under such circumstances, that touches the imagination of all people. The ignorant and uncultured are just as much delighted and excited by such a scene as the most wise and cultured.

A disguise does not necessarily depend upon external raiment, or any material or physical change. A man may be incognito simply from his superior quality, if he differs wholly in his moral character from those among whom he walks. For, although they that are superior can understand the inferior, the inferior can not understand the superior, except so far as they have in themselves some seeds and beginnings of that which the superior nature possesses. A fine artist, among rude lumbermen, may work with them, eat with them, sleep with them, and not seem to any of them to be any thing else than just one of them; whereas he is utterly disguised to them, and has a life within which they suspect not; he is as effectually disguised as a prince would be who should exchange his robes for beggar's garments. Many a woman of fine organization and delicate nature has been reared to the coarsest offices of labor, and has carried a hidden life which no one besides her understood, and which she herself scarcely understood; and, though she was superior, her

superiority was hidden, and she walked unknown to those who knew her best. Moral disguise is the most impenetrable of all disguises.

Christ was a king in disguise; and no being ever walked less known than he. And now, although some eighteen hundred years have been turned in scrutiny upon him, he is still but little known.

It is a matter of profound interest and of profit to look at Christ from the stand-point of the intelligent Jew, and from his own stand-point, and to ask the question, Why was he not known among his own kindred, in his own age, and among his own countrymen? There are lessons to be derived from such a question. It is also a matter of profound interest and of profit to inquire what, judged from his own stand-point, was the history of Christ's life. Was it a success? or was it a failure?

I propose to do two things, in two discourses: to look at Christ's life from the external point of view, and to look at it from the internal point of view.

Who, then, was Christ, the anointed? A being that came down from heaven into this world to shed the light of moral truths upon it! The globe and human society contain in themselves the causes of development in every thing except higher moral truths and the facts of our future life. This highest point requires some added help above that which is stored in the provisions of nature. And to this Christ's mission was confined—namely, bringing that higher moral light which could not be developed except by some divine inspiration. We shall find, therefore, that Christ did not touch one in ten thousand of the questions that belong to ordinary life, and that are proper in it, but that he left them to be solved, as all other questions are, by the process of consecutive evolution. He confined his teaching to the one department of higher moral conditions and higher moral relations. He came not to disturb, nor to superimpose any thing upon the true course of nature, or of things physical, secular, civil, and

social. He brought to light God's nature, man's immortality, and the highest elements of moral character.

The facts of his career are very few. He was born of humble parentage. He became from childhood an exile, returning after some years, inconspicuously and unknown, to his native land. Until he was thirty years old he lived in such obscurity that, with the exception of one single fact, we are without a hint of knowledge concerning him. At the age of twelve he held a memorable dispute with the Jews in the temple, causing them to marvel at his superiority. That momentary glimpse we are permitted to catch between the cradle and the cross; but, aside from that, it may be said that literally, from his childhood until he was thirty years of age, he lived in perfect obscurity.

When he reached the age appointed for the priesthood—the age of thirty—he entered upon a career of public teaching. He did not put himself under the care of official teachers. There is no evidence that he was appointed to teach by any regular authority. By the right of the individual he began to be a public teacher; not officially or ecclesiastically, but morally and substantially, he was a teacher among the Jews during the three years that he pursued that work which we have in part recorded in the New Testament. Then he was cut off as a malefactor, suffering the indignity of the most ignominious execution. But the things which he taught in this brief period, caught up and only in part reported as they were, have since that time been the radical, revolutionary forces of the world. A man came into the world obscurely and ignobly; he was unknown for thirty years; then for three years he taught; and his teachings, not reduced by himself to writing, and only in part by his disciples, have from that time to this been the marrow of thought, and the source and fountain of moral influence on the globe, and have revolutionized it.

Contrast this fact, for one single moment, with the influence of other men upon the world—for there have been other

teachers whose influence has not died, and never will die. Socrates was a man of great mental endowment, of great common sense, and of great moral courage. He wrote nothing; but his disciples recorded his teachings, and they became a moral force in the world. Plato, his disciple, was second to no human teacher; he wrote copiously and elaborately; he never will be surpassed in the art of thinking and writing; his works have never died. Though they were once buried in mediæval superstitions, they have risen and come forth again; and never were they so dominant as today. The force of that Greek mind that lived thousands of years ago not only is not spent, but does not seem to be weakened. After him came Aristotle, who was as great as Plato, only his mind was turned toward material and scientific truths, while Plato's mind was turned toward social and metaphysical truths.

All of these masters were morally and intellectually great; but, undeniable as their influence has been and is, no man will pretend for one single moment that their power would at any time, or will now, at all compare with the power of that Jew who only lived three years as a teacher, who wrote not a word, and who spoke his wisdom, not to scholars that would make accurate registry of it, but to ignorant fishermen that remembered only a part of it, so that it was declared by one of them that the part that was left unrecorded was so great that, if it should be written, the world would not hold the books that would be required. If you take the combined moral influence of Aristotle, of Plato, and of Socrates, and put it beside the moral influence of Christ, it will be found that the light of the Jew is greater than all the illumination of the Greeks.

As to the Romans, they were repeaters and organizers, and not original teachers, and it is not worth while to compare Christ with them.

What was the source of this marvelous power of Christ?

It was not the result of any mere intellectual attainments.

It was not his genius of thought that made him what he was. The literary works which hold their way from generation to generation are almost invariably finely and artistically finished. It is not enough for a man to think wisely and well. It is necessary that his thoughts should take such shape in literature that men shall be fascinated with their form as well as their substance. And the doctrines of the Greeks were clothed in such a manner as to be attractive. But in Christ's teachings there was little that appealed merely to the imagination or the taste. And, although we are conscious that the teachings of Christ are exquisite in one way of looking at them, yet they are without those qualities which usually give continuity of influence to any literary fruit of the human mind. The power of Christ's teachings has arisen from the mere superiority of their moral characteristics.

The secret of the power of Christ did not lay in any subtle poetic or philosophic views. His teachings were fragmentary. They may be said, as literary results, to have been mere crumbs. Yet there was in them an inherent power which gave them immortality upon the earth. In the progress of years, all that was resplendent in literature, all that was stately in organized religion, and all that was august in political power, paled and went down before this rude, homely Gospel.

Here, then, is a being that comes down from heaven, and for three years, after having attained the age of thirty, walks among his countrymen, teaching them not in science, literature, or politics, but with regard to moral relations and moral truth.

Now look at the other elements in the picture. Among the ruling Jews there were two sects—the Sadducees and the Pharisees. Who were the Sadducees? They were men who were skeptics in religion. They were men who disbelieved, therefore, in penal moral government and moral restraint. They were men who were lenient toward human feelings; who sought to make life agreeable; who amiably took the

side of their fellow-men, and, assailing the ruling religious faith and observances, broke down also the superstitions of their day. They labored with those around about them, not for the sake of lifting them higher, but for the sake of making them happier.

There are many Sadducees in our day. All that seek to content men with merely a secular life; all that seek to make the conscience quiet; all that attempt to break the power of divine government upon the conscience, are Sadducees.

And who were the Pharisees? They were those who sought to lift men above their ordinary condition, and bring them under moral restraints, and impose upon them spiritual duties. They were ignorant of the right methods of doing these things, as we shall see; but they were the men of their day who sought to maintain that which was right, to enlighten that which was dark, and to reform that which was abusive. They were men that sought to introduce religion, such as it was, and morality in the temple, in the state, and in the household. They were not all to be despised. The severe denunciations of Christ reveal the corruptions of those who were the leaders of the party at Jerusalem. But it is often true that the leaders are corrupt while the body of the party is well-meaning. They were men that we might perhaps pity and blame; but among the Pharisees of the time of Christ were some of the noblest specimens of men who were at that time living in the world. The Pharisee has been called the Puritan of the Jews. He was. If you contrast the Pharisee with the Greek and the Roman, he seems transcendently nobler than they in moral aspirations and endeavors. If you contrast the Pharisees with the heathen, they shine like stars in the firmament. It is only when you contrast them with life immeasurably higher than theirs, and with moral character transcendently purer than theirs, that they suffer. The reason that the Pharisee has come to be regarded with such contempt is that we have been accustomed to judge him in contrast, not with his times, not with his fellows, but with

the Master whom he misunderstood and crucified, and with the moral law as that Master interpreted it. Relatively to other men, the Pharisees were superior. Relatively to Christ, they were low and even despicable. Their chief sins were selfishness, bigotry, and narrowness in religious duties and views. It was not charged against them that they were not religious or ethical. They were denounced for rigor in the externals of religion, and for the absence of its merciful elements. Their fault was on the side of excessive zeal. It was a zeal that scorned compassion and kindness. It was a zeal that sprang from a selfish and bigoted adhesion to religious views. They had no true pity and humanity in their religion. And there are thousands of religionists yet that have no humanity in them. They have worshiping qualities, they have sentimentality, but they are divested of humane ethical emotions. A religion that does not take hold of the life that now is, is like a cloud that does not rain. A cloud may roll in grandeur, and be an object of admiration; but if it does not rain, it is of little account so far as utility is concerned. And a religion that consists in the observance of magnificent ceremonies, but that does not touch the duties of daily life, is a religion of show and of sham.

The religion of the Pharisees was a religion of ecclesiastics. They confounded religion itself with the instruments or institutions by which the religious spirit or feeling acts. They learned to regard religious forms and religious ordinances as sacred, forgetting that these are the mere vehicle of feeling, and that, therefore, they can not be sacred, since nothing that is material can be sacred. Sacredness belongs to moral qualities, and not to physical; to spirit, and not to matter. There is no such thing as a sacred foundation-stone, or a sacred wall, or a sacred place, except in poetic or popular language. That which is sacred must inhere in the living thing. It is mind-quality, soul quality, that is sacred. They have drifted far from the spirit of religion who believe that the instruments of religion are sacred, instead of religion itself. They

who look upon days, and ecclesiastical ceremonies, and garments, and ordinances as holy, in the modern sense of that word, and worship them, are idolaters. They have set up, right in the threshold of God's church, the worship of forms and ceremonies instead of the service of true religion.

If it was the nature of the Pharisee to be selfish, to leave humanity out of his religion, and to worship the instruments of religion, and not the thing itself, you may be sure that Phariseeism is not dead. You do not need to go to the New Testament to see where Pharisees are. They sit in our churches. They are in all sects. Phariseeism is a quality of human nature. It is the way by which the mind of a man with inferior illumination develops itself. It is one of those methods in which the imperfections of human nature manifest themselves when it is acting in the direction of religion.

If this is a fair description of the Pharisees, they were stern, earnest men, seeking to reform and exalt human society, in the main, by a rigorous use of secular and ecclesiastical forces. They were not without many good qualities; they were not without much that was praiseworthy; but they failed in the essential points of spirituality and love. And as these were the foundation qualities of God's nature and government, they failed at the very pivotal point.

It was in the presence of these rulers that Christ enacted the scenes that are recorded as having passed during the three official years of his life.

The question which I propose briefly to answer is, How must such a being as Christ have appeared to these men, such as they were? First, taking his origin, how must Christ have appeared to the Pharisees?

The Jews were probably the most democratic people that ever lived. We ourselves owe many of our democratic forms to the lawgiver of the desert. Moses was the democrat of the Jewish nation. And, though the Jews afterward had a monarch, and ran through various forms of absolute rule, yet there was among them a strong element of democracy. They

brought up their children to work; and work is one of the most transforming of influences. They that respect work may not be religious, but they are apt to be virtuous; and they that despise it may not be in a technical sense irreligious, but they are tending in that direction. The Jews believed in the fundamental idea of work. They believed in the common people. They believed that every man had a right to disclose and to use any gift that he might possess. They did not hesitate to follow a woman with a timbrel, and permit her to rule them in their rejoicings. A woman judged the nation! And the fact that a prophet sprang up from among herdsmen did not deter them from acknowledging him. They were ready to accept a gift that was a real gift, though it showed itself among the common people. Nevertheless, they had a feeling that the presumptions were that God would manifest himself through the upper rather than through the lower classes. There was a double element among the Jews. There was a feeling, not that God would necessarily manifest himself through the aristocratic portion of the community, or through political organizations, or by a throne, but as there is such a thing as a higher class in morality, as an aristocracy of virtue, or supposed virtue (and there is no aristocracy that is more imperious, more domineering, more tyrannical than ecclesiastical aristocracy), so the Jew supposed that the Messiah would spring from this class.

Now, among the good Jews, although they were democratic in their feelings, and had regard for the common people, the first question, when Christ came among them with his new doctrines was, "Is he going to do any thing for us?" They felt as you feel when a moral principle that is inconvenient thrusts itself for the first time between you and your customs. They said to themselves, "If God meant to do any thing for the world in this age, do you suppose he would pass by the Church, and do it through some other channel?" The Jews felt about Christ as many now do about any reformation when it springs up in our midst—

that, if it is not in the church, it is not good, no matter what it is.

Therefore, the mere fact that Christ was born in obscurity, though it was not a final bar to his being accepted of the Jews, was an occasion of prejudice against him. Yet, having been leavened with true democratic ideas, they perhaps suspended their judgment concerning him, and watched him to see what he would do. And Christ, in his ministering years, passed through a probation. His miracles filled the whole land with wonder. His popular discourses drew the common people, they knew not why, to him, and swept them in his train. As a ship in passing sweeps the movable objects that are near it, and sets them following in its wake, so Christ, wherever he went, drew men to him.

Now this was something for the ruling class to look at. They said, "There is a man of great power, and we must see whether we can bring him to our side and use him." The question in their mind was not this: "Is he truer than we are? Is he better than we are? Will his truth make mankind better, and the world happier?" Their thought was this—and it is not very different from the thoughts of men nowadays: "If this man is with us, we are for him; if not, we are against him." The syllogism was, "God has made us the instrument of enlightening this people; therefore it is essential that we should be kept in authority and power. And if this man goes with us, he goes with religion, and we accept him. If he goes against us, he goes against religion, and we reject him."

The president of a theological seminary says, "This seminary was endowed for the purpose of preaching the true doctrine. If this seminary is taken out of the way, the true doctrine falls. Therefore, whatever opposes this seminary opposes the true doctrine." The president of a tract society says, "This society is to diffuse a pure Gospel; and any thing that breaks up this society is an obstacle in the way of the diffusion of a pure Gospel." If men do not say these

things in so many words, this is the syllogism which they employ practically. The same is true in respect to churches. Men say, "The Church is the grand pillar of religion; and if you destroy the Church, religion will be destroyed; for then it will have no means of propagating itself." They therefore contend for what? Religion? No; for the Church, the instrument of religion. There is the same difference between the Church and religion that there is between the hand and the soul. The hand is important, and I do not propose to cut it off; but if it is a choice between the hand and the soul, I know which I should choose. Now churches, and seminaries, and Christian institutions of all kinds are feet with which religion walks. They are hands with which it helps itself. They are instruments which God employs in carrying it forward. But when a comparison is made between institutions or ordinances and the things which they serve, there is no question which is superior.

But the Pharisees said of Christ, "If he goes with our institutions, if he goes with Jewry, he is right; if he does not, he is wrong." And because he did not go with them they turned against him.

There is some evidence that there was a disposition to secure him, even by appointing him king; and on one occasion the enthusiasm ran so high that the people were about to rise and make him king, and he had himself to interfere to prevent such a foolish enterprise. No doubt this would have taken place with the tacit consent of the Pharisees, who cherished the hope that they might be a power behind the throne, and that they might manage him. When that hope was effectually destroyed, all favor on their part toward Christ was also destroyed. And it is not strange that they turned against him. They were totally ignorant of his real nature and mission. They did not and could not see what he saw, nor know what he knew. And that, you will observe, was the point which was made between him and them over, and over, and over again. The light came upon

them in vain. They did not understand it. God was presented to them as a Spirit, and they did not accept him. He came to them incarnated in Christ, and they rejected the Son and the Father at the same time. Often and often he attempted to show them why they should accept him, urging as reasons that his spiritual elevation, his purity, and his moral nobleness made him divine; that divinity consisted in spiritual influence, and not chiefly in physical power; and that he had in his character all the signs and tokens of being divine. He charged them with blindness—and rightly, too—because they could not see these things.

But they did see and feel what to them was more to the point—that Christ's influence was against them; that he stood in their path; that if he increased they would decrease; and that if the people were to be taught by him *they* could no longer teach them. In other words, they were partisans. Here was an individual that refused to join their party, and did things which had a tendency to disintegrate and destroy that party, and they turned against him.

How do men act under such circumstances now? Is it strange to see a party turn against a man because he does not go with them, without any consideration of his character, or of what the result of his teachings will be? The Pharisees were a party in religion; and when they found that Christ would not sustain them they eschewed him.

Let us see, then, how, in some points, Christ's independent spiritual career traversed party considerations, and how he went to his crucifixion.

In the first place, if you look at Christ's manners and social traits, you will observe that, while he was never less than the greatest, the serene and transcendent light which his words and deeds shed was never so pure and white as when he was in conversation with the most eminent and cultured men of his time. When, however, he was left to himself, it was not their society that he sought. He liked to go among the common people. And notice the effects which resulted.

First, it is declared that it was a cause of offense. The charge against him was that he ate with publicans and sinners, and that he sat down with them. There is a great difference, you know, between preaching *to* people and going *with* people. He might have preached to publicans at appointed times and places, and he would have had small audiences; but he went where the publicans and sinners were; he sat down with them, ate with them, and they found him an agreeable companion. He was pure enough and noble enough to bear the test to which he was subjected in so doing. When he was charged with it as an offense contrary to the Jewish customs, he declared; "I go as a physician goes among the sick. They need me, and I go to them because they need me, not because I need them." But this was very offensive to the purest of the Pharisees.

More than that, he taught the common people, not in rabbinical phrase, but in the vernacular. You will take notice that a minister who joins himself to a sect, and avows that it is his purpose to exalt that sect, is permitted by them to speak in any way he pleases, so that all the benefit inures to his party. But let a man refuse to belong to any sect, let him claim brotherhood with all sects so far as they are Christ's, let him preach the great truths of religion so that the common people shall hear him gladly, and what is the impression produced but this: that the man is an innovator; that he is leaving the old paths; that he is seeking novelties; that he sets his sail to the popular breeze?

Now Christ would not use rabbinical language in his teaching. He did not speak as the Jews did. When he taught the common people, all said, "This man speaks with authority." What does that mean? Weight. He spoke right home to their consciences, and that is always speaking with weight. He brought the Gospel into their houses, into their business, into their dispositions, into their very superstitions. He brought it into their religion. That was a strange place to bring it, it is true; but he brought it there. It was his

habit to preach the Gospel, not professionally, but personally, so as to make it a Gospel to the common people. And this was offensive to the Pharisees.

More than that, the practical superiority which he gave to truth, or principle, over usages and institutions, was offensive to them. It was an indirect assault upon them; for the Pharisees were men that believed in regularity, and order, and subordination, and discipline. The Pharisees were superlatively the model conservatives of the world. They did not disdain growth; but, after all, their sympathies and feelings, first and mainly, inclined them to the policy of taking care of what was already obtained. They did not ignore advancement, but the key-note of their life was conservation. Therefore, when they saw a man of great power and extraordinary gifts disseminating principles which did not belong to their theological system, and raising moral tides which could not but work mischief to them, they felt that he was making not only a personal, but an ecclesiastical attack upon them; and, as conservative religious men, they thought they were bound to oppose him.

For example, was there any thing more sacred to them than sacrifice? The idea of sacrifice was to them what the idea of atonement is to orthodox men now, who hold it to be the centre of the Christian arch. Sacrifice was never despised by Christ, but relatively he undervalued it. The idea of sacrifice among the Jews had taken precedence of humanity, justice, and right. Christ said, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." What does it mean but this, Do not think that sacrifice to God is the highest religious duty? Sacrifice depends for its value on preceding moral qualities. A principle is higher than the ordinance which you take to exhibit that principle. The life of religion in the soul is first in importance; the instruments by which you develop that life are of secondary consideration.

Which is the most important, your boy or the arithmetic which he studies? If there should arise in your mind a superstitious worship of the slate, and pencil, and book, and a forgetfulness of the boy, you would be in the same position that the Pharisees were in of reverencing the instruments of religion instead of religion itself, which these instruments were meant to develop and elevate. Christ selects the element of true religion—namely, love—and says to men, "If you bring your sacrificial gift before God in the temple, in the sight of God it is condemned and despised unless it is brought with a loving heart behind it."

The same is true of his teaching concerning the Sabbath day. It is remarkable that almost every mention of the Sabbath day in which Christ expresses any opinion respecting it was seemingly adverse to its sacredness. Some have supposed that Christ was opposed to the Sabbath day; but he was not. The Sabbath day had become an oppressive day to the common people. It had lost its peculiar fragrance and sweetness; and Christ, meeting it at its oppressive point, put the duty of love in religion higher than any ordinance. He only undervalued the Sabbath as contrasted with the object for which it was ordained. It was the outside ordinance as contrasted with the inside spirit that led Christ to denounce the Pharisaic observance of the Sabbath.

These are instances of Christ's customary teaching, that the truth is higher than the ordinance or usage by which that truth is expressed. The result was, that those who felt themselves condemned, those who felt their methods of religious teaching set aside, those who felt that there was a tendency to unsettle the minds of the Jewish hearers, did not hesitate to declare that he was an infidel. And thus we see how ecclesiastical party-men, blinded by their selfishness, came to regard Christ, first as an invader, then as an aggressor, and finally as a criminal, upturning the foundations of religion.

The whole course of Christ was so influential that the Pharisees could not let him alone. Such was the power of

his life and teaching that they were in the condition of many men of our day, who have said of reformers that were laboring to correct the evils of society, "Why will not these men let these things alone? Why are they always agitating the people?" Christ made Jerusalem too hot for the Pharisees. The public mind had become filled with these new-fangled notions of morality and religion which he promulgated, and the Pharisees wondered why, if he was a minister of the true religion, he would so stir up the people.

That is not all. Christ was the most impracticable man that ever lived, and yet the most practical. He could not be used by the Pharisees for their purposes. He could not live simply for the present, as they did. They were living for immediate results. He lived for results universal and remote. They were a party. He was the Savior of the world. They were Jews. He belonged to the human kind. They sought immediate success. He was establishing the foundations of that kingdom in which dwelleth righteousness. They were for the present and the transient. He was for the future and the stable. How could they use such a man? He was larger than they were; he saw something more than their plans contemplated; he was forever laboring for a more resplendent end than they had conceived of; they could not use him.

Christ was, lastly, a sublime radical. "How dare you," one will say to me, "apply such a term to Christ?" Because my glorious Master is one that has got used to wearing ignominious terms, and any term of ignominy that is made such by contempt of the higher classes against the lower I put upon the brow of Christ. Another thorn it may be, but it is one that brings blood for salvation. And I declare that Christ was the first and the sublime radical. "Now also," says the New Testament, speaking of the coming of Christ, "the axe is laid unto the root of the trees."* What is *radical*

* It is immaterial whether this is interpreted to signify striking at the root, or, as is the more accurate interpretation, lying at the root in readiness for use. In either case it indicates the radical character of Christ's work. He

but a word derived from *radix*, which means root? He was a root-man. He came right at the worm at the root of the trees. A physician that, instead of attempting to palliate a difficulty, deals sharply with the organic lesion, is a radical. In morals, the man that does not attempt to smooth over the surface, but asks what is the fundamental cause of wrong, and then attacks that cause, is a radical. Christ, then, was declared to be a radical. The axe was laid at the root of things. And from the days of Christ to this, the men that have been the most known and felt, and the longest felt in the world, have been men that, passing over compromises and petty ways of settling difficulties, have struck the foundation causes of things, and insisted upon having health and right, and refused partnership with men that were in favor of letting matters take their own course. They have been, like their Master, radicals, and therefore reformers; cursed while they lived, and worshiped when they were dead; thorns in the side of parties, and crucified by them; but held up as the martyrs and heroes of their age by the next generation, who none the less crucify the men of *their* age that are just like them. So it is, and so I suppose it will be as long as human nature is what it is.

Is it possible, then, when you consider the foregoing facts, to suppose that the Pharisees and Christ should have been reconciled to each other? They could not understand him, though he could understand them. They knew half as much as he did, for he declared to his disciples that the wisdom of life was to be *cunning as serpents and harmless as doves.* They had learned the first half, but they had never learned the second. And can one who is only cunning as a serpent understand him who is harmless as a dove? Is it strange that men under the inspiration of worldly ambitions; men in sympathy with parties; men actuated by the feelings which are most influential in the age in which they live; men not

cut up fruitless growths, as we say, "root and branch." Compare, also, Matt., vii., 33, a proverbial saying, apparently a favorite with Christ.

taught in the sanctuary, or enlightened on the subject of their moral duty; men that were living for the time being—is it strange that they should not understand the pure spirit that refused to identify itself with any thing that was merely secular or transient? Is it strange that they who despised the poor should have despised him who was the friend of the poor, and who preached the Gospel to the poor? Is it strange that a man who consorted with publicans and sinners should have been despised by men who would not touch a sinner without afterward washing their hands, lest they might be defiled? It does not show that they were to an extraordinary degree depraved. They were fair specimens of average human nature. You can hew out such men from the timber that we have to-day. They acted exactly as you and I act; as this nation has been acting; as every nation acts. The men that prove to be the regenerators of mankind begin as Christ did, despised and subjected to obloquy. All men that hold in their hands the supposed authorities of religion turn against these on-coming men of power, who, though they are uncomely, shape the foundations of the New Jerusalem, which are to be laid, not as the foundations of human institutions, of hay, wood, clay, and stubble, but of precious stones—which are immortal principles of truth, never to pass away. But as long as there is a God, and a Providence in this world, you never shall lay the foundations of any party or sect in any thing less than absolute justice and right, and have them stand. Build your house on a rock, and it will not be shaken to pieces; build it on the sand, and the first tide that flows and ebbs carries it down. They that build on purity and rectitude are steadfast and safe, but they that build on *arrangements*, on nice and cunning devices, on compromises, are liable at any moment to be overthrown and destroyed.

We have been living for years in a period in which men have sacrificed principle for the sake of quieting the community, for the sake of gaining peace, for the sake of

settling in an easy manner questions which God Almighty was determined should not be settled till they were settled right. We have been living for years in a period in which men have exhausted all their ingenuity to suppress those Christian influences which have been at work in the world. For a time the religion of the churches was arrayed against the Christ of Providence. We have had the law against Christ. Government and commerce have been against Christ. And they have all joined in the cry, "Crucify him! crucify him!" When justice was demanded, men cried out, "Not justice, but peace; give us peace!" But did they get it? Did peace come either to the Church or to the state? God threw wide open the doors of hell, and out came the flames of war! They burned up peace like chaff. Why? Because for so many years men resolutely refused to come up to the grounds of moral truth and moral principle, and stand on them, and say, "Here will we abide, and we will forever seek that which is just and good." I summon the great leaders of our past and crumbling parties, one by one, laden with sin and burdened with iniquity, to rise and come to judgment, that they may bear witness that when truth and right are persecuted there is no peace!

Now, having gone through five bloody years, we come again to great questions which stand petitioning at our doors, and God says, "Settle them on principles of justice and rectitude, and you shall have peace." But the whole nation are asking, "Ought we not, after so long a time, so to arrange as to have peace?" And men are saying, "Why insist upon such radical ideas? Why not accept more temperate views?" Those views which they call *temperate*, and which they are urging us to adopt, are views that have lies in them. I stand here again to say, Truth has no revolution in it. Right has no change in it. Justice is always safe and sure. If you must crucify Christ because he will not join your party, your faction, your church, your religion, then crucify him; but remember the eighteen hundred

years of darkness, and revolution, and turmoil that followed his first crucifixion. The great battle of God Almighty is not fought out yet, and you will have more of it in your day. If you want peace, do right. If you will not do right, remember that God is the incendiary of the universe, and that he will burn your plans, and will by-and-by burn you with unquenchable fire.

I point you this morning to him who, when on earth, was mocked and despised. See him, going from the city where the prophets had been persecuted. Behold him with that very mob hooting at him and deriding him that but the day before crowned him and followed as he rode into Jerusalem, shouting, "Hosanna! Hosanna!" See him on the cross when his disciples, afraid, had deserted him, and there were only women to stand near him. Behold how he died, and the earth lost its light! And see how he came to life, and went up on high again, to carry out those truths in which is the life of nations, and in which is the health of man's soul.

By that Christ, crucified but victorious, I bring you the truths of righteousness, and of justice to the poorest; and I say to you, Will you do right? If you crucify Christ in his poor and despised ones, be assured there is blood yet; there is revolution yet; there is war again! If ten years ago I had told you that there would be war, you would have laughed; but, sobered by experience, you may not now scorn the idea, and think it to be wild. In rectitude there is safety, and in unrighteousness there is always the fire of hell.

Young men, take your ideal of what is right not from the great of this world. Go not to presidents, or secretaries, or generals, or merchants, or ministers, nor to any man, for your ideal. Even the highest and best men are so sympathetic with their age, and nation, and time, that they are not fit to be models. Take your measure of character and duty from him that was despised. Imitate him that was crowned with thorns. Follow him that bore the cross. Bear Christ's cross, and you shall be an heir of Christ's throne.

VII.

The Life of Christ,

Without and Within;

IN TWO SERMONS.

Second, Christ Within.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, October 8th, 1865.

The Life of Christ:—Within.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."—John, xii, 24, 25.

These words—"he that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal"—are in substance the same, though in form varied, frequently repeated. They are several times recorded in the evangelical histories,* showing that they made a deep impression upon the disciples' minds; and showing, also, that the Savior, after the manner of his countrymen in the East, reduced his teachings to proverbial forms. This epigrammatic method favored the retention of truth in the memory.

A seed carries with it the preparation for a new structure. The greatest part of a seed is mere bulk, whose office is to wrap up and protect the vital principle or germ. It also is food for the earliest life of that germ. So the body carries a vital principle which is hereafter to be developed; and the body is a mere vehicle and protection of this vital principle. The seed can not give forth the new plant within it except by undergoing a chemical decomposition and absorption. Our Savior teaches that this is the law of the evolution of spiritual life in man. Our physical life must expend itself, not necessarily in the immediate act of death, but by ministering to the spiritual element in us.

Of this doctrine of the subordination of the outward to the

* Matt., x., 39; xvi., 25; Mark, viii., 35; Luke, ix., 24; xvii., 33.

inward, of the material to the spiritual, Christ's own life was the most illustrious exemplification. He threw away his life. And yet no other life of which we have any knowledge was ever so successful, so powerful, and so glorious.

I propose to illustrate both of these facts—that Christ utterly lost his life, and that in so doing he saved and augmented it.

In one point of view, then, Christ's life was an entire failure. Remarkable it was in its failure, whether you measure it by the objects which men ordinarily seek as the chief good of life, or by the gratification of those faculties which carry in them among men the principal motives of human life, or by the productiveness of those powers which he gave evidence of possessing. In each of these three respects he lost the ends of life. He did not get the things which men think to be most valuable; neither did he derive much gratification in those faculties which men live to gratify; nor, though endowed with a wondrous versatility of powers, did he employ those powers in such a productive manner as to make it appear that he gained the object of life. You can not conceive of one endowed with such opportunities who, measured by the temporal and earthly standards, so utterly squandered them, and was so completely bankrupt of results.

This is the outside view. Let us look at it a little.

Regarding our Savior in his general relations, it would seem as though he could scarcely have entered life at a worse door than at the portal of Jewish nationality. For in that age of the world it was a misfortune to be born a Jew in the estimation of every body except a Jew. That is not wonderful; for every body thinks it unfortunate to be born any thing but what he is. Every nation thinks all other nations are to be pitied, if not hated. And in that age every nation despised all other nations. But the Jew had a special measure of contempt meted out to him. However nations differed in their likes and dislikes, they all agreed in a common hatred of the Jew. Nor can you imagine what this would be

in the history of the life of one like Christ, unless you take some parallel experience.

Suppose, for instance, you had been born an African; what would have been your opportunities of life, of social intercourse, of entrance into the great professions, of gaining political distinction, of amassing wealth, or of securing those enjoyments which are within your reach now? Measure your present chances in life with what they would have been if you had been born black instead of white.

Now it was very much, that, in Christ's time, to have been born a Jew. And Christ was born a Jew. So far as worldly opportunity was concerned, he might better have been born a heathen or a barbarian. Although of noble lineage, yet, regarding him in his relations to his own nation, he scarcely was better off than he otherwise would have been; for his parents were not in influential position, and they could not give him the privileges of education. He had but few opportunities in youth; and he was dependent for his training almost entirely upon the natural evolution of his own faculties. You recollect how he was reproached as being illiterate, or, rather, how people marveled that one who was illiterate should know so much. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" said his adversaries and the spectators. He had inherited neither name, place, nor influence. Many men are dependent for their standing upon the fact that they have the capital of those who went before them to begin upon. Christ had nothing of the kind.

He never strove, either, to repair these conditions of fortune. He was born of parents both poor and low in life, inconspicuous and uninfluential, and he does not seem ever to have felt the sting of the deprivations which he suffered, as many a man does who is conscious all his life long that the impulse and spur to exertion is the narrow and pinched estate of his youth.

Let us exclude the pleasure and the vicious practices that were disallowed by the morals of all nations, and contemplate

own country. With the exception of a journey to Egypt in his infancy, he never was outside his own native land. He never had a place among men of letters, nor was he a power in any philosophical circle.

But even more remarkable is it that he did not produce any immediate impression upon the religious opinions and feelings of his age. And after his resurrection there could be discerned no change which he had wrought in the religious ideas of the Jews.

If you measure Christ's influence, therefore, upon the mass of his countrymen, it was null and void. If you measure his influence upon the higher minds that controlled the governments, the philosophies, and the literature of his day, there is no evidence that when he died he had produced any impression whatever upon them. He had not. "The light," it is declared, "shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." The light of Christ's presence shone into the darkness of this world, but the darkness did not comprehend it, and it was just as dark during his life on earth as it had been before.

Neither did he found a family. Men are born to love and marriage by a decree broad as humanity; and while each man has his own liberty, and exercises his own choice of selection, yet underneath that voluntary power of choice is a necessity of selecting which, in relation to the race, is as irresistible as fate itself. But Christ, though he belonged to mankind, was not carried in any such stream to any such destiny. Upon no one did he ever bestow his heart's treasured affection. He never knew the sweet relationships of husband and father in the household. Among the useful ambitions which men have, none is more amiable than the wish to found a family, to pour it full of noble influences, and to rear in it a troop of children that shall carry forward the family name, adorned with all the priceless qualities of virtue and services worthily performed, down with honor and power to remote times. But no such ambition entered the mind of

Christ, or, if it did, there was no result that answered to any such thought or purpose.

Having, then, passed through life, not concerned with wealth, and therefore not connected with business; without any important apparent relations to the common people among whom he moved; failing to make any impression upon the dominant minds of his times in politics, literature, and religion; and not having, in any way whatever, entered into the relationships of the family, what could his life produce that should remain? Nothing, apparently. What an arrow is that shoots quickly through the air, and drops far off in the thicket, and is lost, that Christ's life seemed to have been. The air which is parted by the passage of the arrow instantly rushes together again, and nothing is left to mark the course of the flying missile. And Christ seemed to have been hurtled through his time, and to have fallen in death, without leaving the slightest trace, after a few weeks, of his having been alive.

His arrest, trial, and condemnation were more than ordinarily ignominious, and apparently more than ordinarily fruitless. There are men the most glorious event of whose history is their trial and condemnation. Where, for instance, some noble nature makes his last hours the occasion of defending a great principle of right, and thus sows the seed for blessed results in the future, his sunset into death is more illustrious than any common life could be. But no principle was set forth in the death of Christ. It was the occasion of advancing no great argument in favor of the right. It brought to light no important truth. There was nothing remarkable about his trial. It was an ordinary criminal sacrifice of justice on the part of his judge. He was crucified as a criminal, ignominiously. He died, and all seemed utterly lost. There was no prophecy in his cross. There was no background of light on which that cross lifted itself. Darkness fell upon the earth, and the earth trembled. Not even his mother, nor the women that were with her, nor the disciples, saw any

thing but eclipse, disaster, and final confusion in his death. He died, having left no trace behind. Neither in the act of his dying was there any conspicuous power, or the promise of power. Nor, afterward, when his resurrection came, was there much alleviation, except in the case of a few, for Christ never appeared publicly again. He never appeared to any, subsequent to that time, except his disciples, to whom he appeared as to witnesses. And when he had done this, he went up on high. And that closes the career of the Savior.

Now, was there ever a life, when you come to look at it in its details, that seemed to be thrown away more than Christ's? Considering what men live for, judging from the great ends of human life that you see accomplishing around you, if you were to ask, "Did Christ gain any thing by living?" would not the irresistible answer of every man be, "He threw his life away?" He lost it. It was worth nothing for common wealth. It earned nothing of popular influence. It did not change a law. It did not establish a new principle. It did not make a discovery. It did not put up or put down one ruler. It did not overturn one altar. It was irradiated by not one single victory over outward circumstances; and, unless there is some mysterious inward thing that took place, something beyond the reach of the ordinary historic senses, then the life of Christ was one prolonged suffering unto disaster and unto death.

But what are the facts on the other side? It is declared that he that will save his life shall lose it, and that he that will lose his life shall save it, and save it unto eternal life. Did Christ lose his life? Did he not save it by the losing?

Born a Jew, he belonged to the most accursed and detested of nations; and yet is it not a great fact that no man ever thinks of Christ as a Jew? So totally is this all changed, that it never occurs to any man, except it comes to us by historical research, that he was of that scattered, despised people. All nations on the globe are now followers of this Jew, whom they never suspect of being a Jew. There is victory in

the fact that that which hung about him as a cloud of gloom in the early parts of his life has been utterly dissipated.

He was born without opportunity in his social relations; he had a parentage that made him familiar with the lowest characteristics of life; he was without education or privilege; and yet, do you not know, to-day, that in Christendom there is not a household, not a potent body, not a church, not a community, that is not proud to call itself *Christ*-ian? He had no family to fall back upon; he received no important help from any source; and yet, after the lapse of a thousand years, there is scarce a household that does not claim to be Christ's, and that does not call its children his. The very kings of the earth bring their glory and baptize it with his name; and all the world are inheriting something that he earned.

Having no opportunities for learning, he had to rely upon the use of his unaided faculties. But where has there been, for a thousand years, a school, a university, or a system of ethical philosophy that has not been conscious that it derived its germ from this same Christ, who was never a scholar, was never a man of literature, who wrote not a line, and left not a volume?

He seemed to be quite indifferent to ordinary sources of wealth, and to its power. And yet do not you know that to-day wealth is more and more known to have moral relations? Has there not been growing an influence interpenetrating all business and secular pursuits, so that men recognize an ethical principle that reigns and governs in the great realms of mammon? From out of the life of Christ has there not issued an influence that is to have control in wealth-making? All over the world is there not more of the Christian spirit in the use of wealth? And though the world is not regenerated, and is not Christian, except in a limited degree, yet is not this work begun in it, and is not the kingdom of wealth yet to own the name of Christ?

He never gained much influence with the common people—his own people. And yet, now, is there any name named

under heaven which arouses so much enthusiasm among the common people as Christ's? If you take Christendom through, is it not understood more and more that, if there is a name to live by, if there is any influence which can defend the weaker classes from the injustice of the stronger who are leagued against them, it is the name and influence of the Lord Jesus Christ?

He made little impression, in his lifetime, upon the rulers of his own people, and those who were versed in learning and philosophy. But is there now any thing that is more influential than Christ? If I were to be asked, What is the characteristic of the literature of our time? I should say that it was a searching after natural justice, and the expression of every form of humanity—and *humanity* is only another word for love toward the necessitous. Indeed, justice and love were the two especial attributes of Christ's spiritual life, though they made little impression on the time in which he lived. But he has now filled the channels of thought and poetic sentiment with his peculiar nature; and more and more, since Christ's day, do you find, even in treatises of law, the principles of Christian justice.

His life was thrown away, but it was thrown away just as I throw away my handful of grain when I cast it into the soil. I lose it. It dies. But it dies that it may give growth to another life. He took his life and buried it, and there was nothing of it. It was disintegrated. But it was given to another life that was coming forward slowly and gradually through long periods, but that, at length, was to fill the world. A handful of corn in the earth shall grow, and shall wave like Lebanon, and like the forest that covers the hills and mountains, in the end.

In the body Christ was planted and lost; but as soon as he had died he began to bring forth fruit. Like some plants, like young trees, he bore fruit in a small measure at first; but, like those same plants and trees, he has grown and grown until now he bears fruit in abundance. And Christ, that lost

every thing, has gained every thing. He has filled the world with his influence; he has revolutionized its affairs; old political laws have been taken away, and new political laws have come into the ascendant; new religious ideas have taken the place of old and effete religious systems; old philosophies have been laid aside as antiquarian relics, and new philosophies have sprung up in their stead. And all these new laws, and ideas, and philosophies have sucked at the bosom of Gospel truth. The world is full, in every vein and channel, of the power of that man who went down in darkness, and was lost, apparently, in eclipse and final disaster.

Did not he throw his life away? and did not he get it again? Was he not sacrificed? and was he not saved? Was he not utterly given up to ruin? but out of that ruin has there not been the building of a new heaven and a new earth, in which dwells righteousness?

Looked at from an exterior point of view, Christ's life was an utter failure; but looked at from the interior, it was a most illustrious victory.

You are to take notice, too, that the gain which comes to a moral or spiritual life is one which involves in it time, and therefore faith. And the fruit of Christ's life has shown itself gradually. There was but little at first. Then there was more. It has increased ever since. The life of Christ became constructive and organic. It was not an influence from without imposed on the ordinary laws of nature. It was part and parcel of that economy of God which was established at the creation of the world. He was as much a part of the organic law of the human family and of history as any other element. And, taking the natural course of its evolution, the life of Christ has been a life of ages. There never was conceivable a life that, being thrown away, so reasserted itself, and so munificently redeveloped itself.

In view of this enunciation of facts, I ask you, first, to see how the same thing is going on, in a small way, in our time. Christ walked like a shadow in his day; and if you had ask-

ed at that time, "Where are the secrets of power in the world?" any Jew would have pointed to the old temple, and said, "There are the secrets of the world's power." If, as he said it, you had seen some Greek smiling, and you had asked him, "Where is the secret of power in the world?" he would have said, "Have you been in Athens? Have you seen her temples and statues? Have you seen the Parthenon? Have you seen her art and read her literature? Have you entered into the depths of the learning of her Plato and Aristotle? The world's history is wrapped up in Athenian art and literature." And if, while he yet spoke, a disdaining Roman had passed by, and you had followed him and said, "Wherefore that smile?" he would have said, "The Jews and the Greeks are filled with superstitions, and are blinded as to the true source of the world's power. That power is centred in Rome, whose greatness is unequaled by that of any other nation on the globe." And how would Jew, and Greek, and Roman have joined in mirthful derision if you had pointed to that person, Jesus Christ, who was to be crucified, and said, "In that man is the secret of the whole world's power." But the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, with their philosophies, their governments, and their power, have gone down, while this shadow has risen into greater and greater power, until it fills the world.

This leads me to speak, next, of the greatest truth that Christ enunciated—namely, the superiority of the moral over every thing else. All the world believed in the power of force. The patrons of force are the passions and desires of the human heart. The Greek had learned to believe that the secret of power was in the understanding. But the apostle Paul, repeating what the Master had taught, declared that it was the spiritual kingdom of righteousness in Christ Jesus that was the dominant power. Our Savior, when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," propounded the most original and the most revolutionary principle of human

life that ever was made known. The man that lives under the supreme influence of moral elements is the man that is victorious over all the elements that are represented by those faculties which are lower than the moral. So that, if any one would be great in wealth, literature, learning, or any dynastic quality, the secret of strength is not in money, or knowledge, or understanding, or political influence, but in the supremacy of the moral elements.

We are still repeating that at which we smile in reading of the ambitious mother who brought her two sons to Christ, and said, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom." We are every one of us seeking greatness by outside measures; and Christ is perpetually saying to us, "Can ye drink of the cup that I shall drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? Can you throw away your life? Can you mortify your pride? Can you subdue your selfishness? Can you lay aside the old man? Can you die that you may live?" We are running eagerly, one after wealth, another after praise, another after honor. One feels himself secure because the golden foundations of his wealth are so deep and broad; another because his ideas are built into systems and sciences. And we still are making our manhood to lie in these external elements, in which Christ had no life, and in which he desired to have none. We are seeking to be Christians by achieving worldly eminence and power. We have not yet learned that it is not by the outward and physical, but by the inward and spiritual, that men become true men, and that manhood is to be measured.

Now, may we not learn from the example of Christ and his history the inevitable weakness of any course or career that is founded in externals merely? And may we not learn, also, that there is immortality and victory in any course that is founded on the divinely spiritual? We are living in an age in which we are in danger of having our senses overshadowed. We are being impressed so much by physical things that we

are in danger of forming our judgments of what is right, and safe, and permanent from the fleshly side, and not from the spiritual. There never was a time when it was more needful for us to recur to the reason of Christ's power in the world than now; never a time when we were more in danger of throwing away true permanence for barren change; never a time when we were more in danger of missing the secret of inevitable success. That man who has the truth with him; who has a principle higher than any that has gone before; that man whose policy, whose statesmanship, whose legislation, whose faith involves the highest reach possible of the human understanding in the spiritual direction—that man will endure, and is bound to immortality. How many there are who are throwing the corn away and running after the husk and cob, because these are more bulky! There are many who are not only doing this, but despising those who count the exterior to be comparatively worthless, and who insist upon a higher standard. Just as soon as men are willing to accept the truth in its higher relationships, just so soon they begin to grow strong. If they despise it, and crucify it, and cast it out utterly unto death, nevertheless, it can not be destroyed. It will come up again, and again, and again; for the life of God is in every particle of truth and justice in this world.

Men may crucify their Christ again in this law or that policy; may hustle him out of Jerusalem to his Calvary, and may shake their garments as the Sanhedrim did, and say, "We have got rid of the disturber;" may lift him on the cross to ignominy, and say, "He shall never again touch this law or that policy;" may bury him in the rock, and put a stone there, and seal it with official seals, confident that no man can ever bring him out again; and, after all, when three days have gone by Christ will break open the tomb, and men, on going to the spot, shall find there angels of prophecy, bright and radiant. Out of the tomb of many and many a buried Christ-truths have come angels of benefaction and mercy.

Our times are full of struggling Christs—Christ in laws, in humanities, in policies; and you are passing them by, or casting them out, or treading them under foot. But immortality is with every one of them. You will perish, wealth will change, laws will explode, policies will be scattered like chaff from the summer's threshing-floor; but that which is eternally right, and true, and just, and good, can not be pierced by sword or buried by the ballot, since it has the decrees of God behind it. And blessed be they that have the wit and wisdom to know that it is best to do right, to do it at once, and so to abbreviate the labors of society.

To that army of ignominious and profitless sufferers that work out by the imagination fantastic troubles, to be repeated over, and over, and over again, I have nothing to say. But to those who suffer for a good reason; to those who are bearing their Gethsemane; to those who are carrying their cross, and living as Christ lived—and there are thousands of them—I wish to address a word. Are there not in this audience hundreds that, when they turn their thoughts inward and backward, think that if they could have consented to have done such and such things they would have been better off? Some persons are said to stand in their own light. Are there not some of you that apparently have stood in your own light? Are there not men whom you have known from their youth up who were not over-scrupulous in business affairs, who went into craft and deceits, who became millionaires, and rose to eminence and power, and who now stand high and are prospered? and do you not say, "If I could have got over some prejudices that I had, so as not to have been afraid of departing a hair's-breadth from the line of rectitude, I might have been better off than I am now; but I stood in my own light, and I have been struggling against the current ever since, beaten back at every step?" You have maintained your conscience, though, have you not? "Oh, yes, what there was of it?" And you have maintained your love of truth? "Yes, I have that yet." You have maintained, also,

your aspiration after higher manhood? "Yes, that I have still; but, then, I have no funds; I have no homestead; I have nothing before me." Nothing before you! You have the kingdom of God Almighty before you. You have all glory before you. If you have saved truth, and conscience, and love, and manhood, and faith, do not envy any one. The wealth of the world will pass away very soon, but what bankruptcy can come over the exchequer of God? And you are heirs of God. You did not stand in your own light when you refused to yield to temptation.

Are there any young men here who think it is not profitable to serve God? Which will you take, the prosperous Jew, or the despised Christ? See what each of them was in his own time—the one clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day, flattered, feasted; the other poor, neglected, cast out, persecuted. But which would you rather be to-day? In the long fight, which had the strongest arm? Where is the Jew to-day? and where is Christ? Look up for the Prince and Savior! Look down for his enemies!

Take heart, then. Do not think that a man has thrown his life away because he has not silver and gold. You will get, perhaps, more of these than you expect; but whether you get a penny or not, you will get transcendently more in that life which is near at the door. For you that life is nearer than you think. Many of you will go before another year rolls around, and will put to proof my words in the kingdom of your Father.

But others still suffer. Are there none here that suffer for their children? I stood in the public burning-place at Oxford, where the old reformers were burned, and with inexpressible feelings I went back in thought and history to their time; but I have seen cases of martyrs that were burned at the stake which were much more piteous than these. I have seen many a woman who, because she would not betray fealty, and because she could not yield love, was day and night burned at the stake of an intemperate husband, bound to

him, suffering more than he suffered, covering his shame, hiding his faults, repairing his mistakes, studying his welfare, pouring out her life for his worthless life. And if there are such martyrs here to-day, I say to them, Do not be discouraged. You are following in the steps of the great Victor, who by defeat was victorious. Remember that Christ gained his victory by patient waiting in suffering. Remember what by his servant he said, "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Is there not here many a heart that is sorrowing in family matters? Are there not many of you who are conscious that you are bound with bonds and cords from which you could only release yourself by rending what are called the decencies and proprieties of life? Are there not those here who are bearing the yoke and suffering for a parent, a brother, a sister, an orphan, some helpless or dependent one? You who are yielding your opportunities, and joys, and life for another, patiently, are carrying the cross of Christ. Yes, and it is Christ in you that is inspiring you to do that, and saying to you, "Child, a little while longer lose your life. Do not be afraid to be lavish of it. Pour it out. Do not be economical. Lose it, lose it, and you shall save it unto life eternal."

Who are they that I see triumphing in the heavenly host? They that lived in ceiled houses? They that walked the earth with crowns upon their heads? They that knew no sorrow? No. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;" they that cried from under the altar, "How long, O Lord, how long?"—these are they that stand highest in the kingdom of God. Heaven is just before you. And many of you that seem to have a long and weary path of suffering will soon be done with your period of trial, and will rise to honor and glory in Christ Jesus.

Oh, that I could pour in upon the young the majesty and

the sanctity of living for the invisible; that is to say, for honor, and truth, and fidelity! Oh, that I could make you feel how essentially brittle, how friable, how perishable are all material sources of strength! God is the centre of life, and spiritual realities are the only things that will endure. Stone, and iron, and silver, and gold, and timber, and cities, and nations, and outward things are but pictures, painted soon to fade away; while truth, and love, and fidelity, and purity shall last forever and forever.

May it please God, then, when we rise in the morning of the resurrection, to let shine upon us the hope of our coming glory, that, when we enter heaven, our faces may be as the stars on the horizon, bright, and still rising into greater beauty, so that we may evermore shine as the brightness of the firmament.

VIII.

Crowned Suffering.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, October 28th, 1866.

Crowned Suffering.

"And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Prætorium; and they call together the whole band. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, and began to salute him, Hail, king of the Jews! And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and, bowing their knees, worshiped him. And when they had mocked him they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him."—Mark, xv., 15–20.

These events followed the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrim. He had gone through the suffering of Gethsemane. He had been arrested through the treason of one of his own disciples. He had been examined by his countrymen, and tried. Then, having suffered buffetings and abuse, he was taken to Pilate. There, he was questioned without answering. To please the people at last, though he publicly declared that he found no fault with him, Pilate gave Jesus to the soldiers.

The Roman ferocity that looked upon suffering as a luxury, that made its joy in beholding gladiators and wild beasts in hideous conflict, here showed itself in characteristic exhibition. The whole band was called together, that not one of them might lose the sport. Then the Savior was arrayed in purple, a wreath of briers, or small thorns, was "platted," and with this he was crowned. Then they jeered him, and put a reed or cane in his hand for a sceptre; and they began, with laughter ill suppressed, to bow, and to worship this man. With a double-edged derision they called him "King," for it was a mockery of him, surely, and to call such a one "King

of the Jews" was also an exquisite satire on the nation. It cut both ways.

He had already been spit upon and severely smitten before the Sanhedrim. He spake nothing. His silence was so remarkable that it attracted attention. Pilate, even, noticed it. There was great dignity in it. There was a moral meaning in it that men *felt*, even if they could not understand it. It was not the silence of nothing, but of something too mighty for words. *All that a man hath will he give for his life;* but Christ would not give even a word for his. He now stood among the ribald soldiery. They renew the indignities of the Jews. They empurple him. They nod and beck, and laugh and roar, as the most lithe and mountebank soldier assumes with greatest success the airs of a courtier, and with mock reverence and adroit humility acknowledges the kingship of the silent, thorn-crowned sufferer.

Consider this scene in its external relations. He was a Jew before Romans that despised Jews. He was a Jew rejected of his own rulers and people, and therefore lower than a Jew. Abandoned by his disciples, he was alone. All the laws of his country had profited him nothing. Those whom he had saved were not there. Those whom he had healed, and fed, and taught were far away. He was doomed, and deserted. Before him was the cross looming up. Solitary he stood, and silent, in utter helplessness. Can any thing be more hopeless? Was ever such a life so wasted? And thus it appeared to the Jewish priests, and thus to the soldiers, and thus to his own disciples. They saw nothing but what their eyes could minister, and *that* seemed the extremity of woe, the very depth of disaster and degradation.

But pierce this external appearance, and what is it? A body weakened, disgraced, suffering, and just coming to more awful agony. Was this all? Within that unspeaking form was the home of a great and suffering love. A nature which Time shall never be able fully to interpret was now at its point of greatest grandeur—the full of love. It was not that

love which gives and takes, but that love which is the highest ecstasy of mortal life—that love which suffers for another. To say that suffering for another's good is the highest element of deity would be to venture beyond knowledge; but we may say that it is the highest element yet unfolded to us, and that all other conceptions of character are far behind this. A love without self-assertion, without self-thought, with a spirit that takes upon itself another's woe; a love that purposely, consciously, calmly, and long, suffers rather than that another should suffer—this is the very and peculiar revelation of God in Christ Jesus. To be sure it had been true from the beginning, but it was needful in some way to disclose it to this world. It was needful, therefore, that some one should suffer, that in the example men might have concrete teaching of that love which, by mere words, could never be made understandable. The secret, the fount, the hidden reason of that influence which the cross has exerted, and the pledge of its perpetual power, is in this love-suffering for others. There is no other power in heaven, and there shall be no power on earth, that, for majesty and productiveness of effects, shall equal or match, or shall be mentioned in common with this, when it shall be well understood. Love-suffering for others is the highest justice, the highest purity, the highest truth, the noblest government.

If, then, you look within, and see the soul of Christ standing solitary, and suffering silently, and know that he meekly stood bearing a love which for others' sake suffered, and suffered patiently, you will find that your heart is kindled as before an unveiled divinity; and behold, you will see beneath these mockings really a king! for, though in derision they crowned him, he *was* crowned, and the thorns are typical of the crown that love wears upon its heart!

He was, the greatest of all his contemporaries, king of the world, of time, and of eternity, just because he was the crowned Sufferer. Other kings there were, but he was the greatest. Other crowns flashed splendor from stones beyond

price, but no stone ever yet was to be valued with these spines of thorns for glorious beauty. What is a stone, a diamond, an emerald, an opal, but mere cold, physical beauty? But every thorn in that crown is a symbol of divine love. Every thorn stood in a drop of blood, as every sorrow stood deep in the heart of the Savior. And the great anguish, the shame, the indignity, the abandonment, the injustice, and that other unknown anguish which a God may feel, but a man may not understand—all these were accepted in gentleness, in quietness, without repelling, without protest, without exclamation, without surprise, without anger, without even regret. He was to teach the world a new life. He was to teach the heart a new ideal of character. He was to teach a new power in the administration of justice. A divine lesson was needed—that love is the essence of Divinity; that love, suffering for another, is the highest form of love; that that love, when administered, carries with it every thing that there is of love, and purity, and justice; and not only that love is the fulfilling of the law, but that God himself is love.

This was the hour, then, of Christ's grandeur. He was King then, and was indeed crowned. No throne was like the steps on which he stood. No imperial person was so august as this derided and martyred Jew. If he had, by a resort to violence, relieved himself, he would have been discrowned. To suffer in sweet willingness; to have the suffering roll to unknown depths and not to murmur—this was to be a king far beyond the ordinary conception of kingship.

Oh, could some prophet's prayer have touched the eyes of those that stood about him, that for a moment they might have seen the sight behind and within the flesh, how strange would have been their gazing! How would the spiritual beauty and power have risen up before them! Once, when they would have arrested him, he said, "I am he whom ye seek," and they fell as if struck to the ground; and now, had there been a spiritual unfolding that should have disclosed his real character, and, as it were, declared, "I am he," me-

thinks it would have thrown the soldiers to the ground, or sent them flying everywhither.

Stand by him now, and look down through the times to come. From this point of view interpret the passage, "Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." Ages are to roll by; nations are to die, and nations are to rise and take their places; laws are to grow old, and from new germs laws are to unfold; old civilizations are to crumble, and new eras are to dawn with higher culture; but to the end of time it will be seen that this figure stands high above every other in the history of man! "A name which is above every name" was given to him—not for the sake of fame, but in a wholly different sense: a name of power; a name of moral influence; a name that shall teach men how to live, and what it is to be men in Christ Jesus. The crown of thorns is the world's crown of redemption. The power of suffering love, which has already wrought such changes in the world, is to work on with nobler disclosures, and in wider spheres; it is to teach men how to resist evil; how to overcome sin; how to raise the wicked and degraded; how to reform the race; how, in short, to create a new heaven and a new earth, in which is to dwell righteousness.

It is this crowned sorrow in Christ which proved him to be King of redemption. It is the very focus of the redemptive element, that one was found with love enough to suffer remedially for the world. We often contrast law and love; and in our inferior being, perhaps it is necessary to analyze and take them apart, and contrast them, although in the divine mind and administration they are doubtless inseparably mingled. As presented to us in the human condition, law may be considered rather as a preventive—seldom as a curative. Love is both. It prevents, but, still more, it heals transgression. Law punishes for the sake of society. Human penal laws are devices of human weakness, needful for our state, simply because other and better ways are scarcely within our reach. But, while law makes transgressors suffer, love suffers

for transgressors. Both carry justice; both vindicate purity, truth, mercy; but law, in the whole sphere of human administration, puts the burden, the woe, the deep damnation on the transgressor. Love, yet juster, higher, purer, takes the suffering and the woe upon itself, and releases the transgressor. Which carries the sublimest justice, law or love? Which rules highest, reaches deepest, spreads widest, and best meets the want of man's whole being—the penal justice that says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," or the disclosed justice of love, which says, "I have found a ransom; I bear the stripes; I carry the guilt and the penalty; I suffer, that the world may go free?"

Laws are for merely human conditions. As such, they are needful; but they are never to be considered as being perfect; nor, indeed, as being the truest symbols of the perfect administration of divine government. It is folly for us to expect to understand all that is within us and round about us; but of the things that are round about us, we are to take heed which of them are symbols of divine character and divine administration. If there is any thing in this world that is weak, it is a human government or human law administered by human beings. Law attempts to supply what it never can—a rule of perfect fairness, perfect justice. Therefore, in a system of law, a thousand things are necessary, simply because you are attempting to do, by external frame-work, that which God does, with absolute certainty, by knowledge, and equity, and rightness of spirit.

To reason that God must administer justice with such equivalents as men do, is to reason from weakness to strength, from imperfection toward perfection. As men exist on earth, laws are indispensable; but they are devices to maintain society. There is, however, a view of individual value that sinks all laws and governments on earth into relative insignificance. I can conceive that to the mind of God, looking upon a single soul, and unrolling it as it shall be disclosed through the cycles of eternity, there may come, in the far per-

spective, such a thought of the magnitude of a single soul, as that in the view of God that soul shall outweigh in importance the sum total of the governments and populations of the globe at any particular period of time. I can understand that God may sound a soul to a depth greater than earth ever had a measure to penetrate, and find reasons enough of sympathy to overmeasure all the temporal and earthly interests of mankind. And I can conceive that God should assume to himself the right to execute his government of love by suffering for a single soul in such a way as quite to set aside the ordinary courses of the secular and human idea of justice.

This is to my mind the redemptive idea. I do not believe it is a play between an abstract system of law and a right of mercy. I think that nowhere in the world is there so much law as in redemption, or so much justice as in love.

The redemption of Christ is a revelation to men, not that love has triumphed over justice, or government, or law, but that there was a higher way of justice. There was a conception of justice in love that, when unfolded, would be a power for cleansing, and restraining, and building up such as belonged to no other period before. And, as I conceive of the redemptive idea, it was a spectacle of love suffering for others in such a way as shall redeem them from the power of sin. This is a higher justice and a nobler assertion of purity than any mode of punishing can be. Punishing may be the final alternative, but it is not the divinest method. Penal laws are secondary adjuncts; whereas, towering up, central, and radiant as the New Jerusalem, is disclosed in Christ Jesus the one great divine motive-power — that heart-love which is pure, and just, and true, suffering for those that are impure, and unjust, and untrue, cleansing them, and justifying justice. Love is fatherhood, justice is kingship, and Christ was the kingly father.

Christ did not come to teach the world the guilt of sin, and its desert of penalty. These the whole world knew before he came; it was the knowledge of these things that was press-

ing noble spirits down. He did not come to secure punishment. Men thought him to be a judge, like the stern old prophets that came to revolutionize society on account of wickedness; but he says, "I did not come to condemn; I come to save." He emphasizes and repeats that thought. He did not come to teach the fact of guilt, or to punish guilt. There was no need of his coming for either of these. The whole frame-work of the universe is appointed to secure penalty. There is no man that can hide sin so that God's officers shall not overtake him. There is no need of attempting to secure punishment, for the natural course of things, first or last, would overwhelm every sinner with condign punishment. Rescue, not penalty, was that which needed a divine revelation. Christ came to save, to rescue, and by this vicarious suffering to redeem them from the penalties of their wrong-doing. And when I see men busy about the *method* of atonement, I marvel at them. It is as if a man that was starving to death should insist upon going into a laboratory to ascertain in what way dirt germinated wheat. It is as if a man that was perishing from hunger should insist upon having a chemical analysis of bread. How many books have been written, and how many sermons have been preached, to show *how* God could be just, and yet justify a sinner; how he had a right to do it; and what were the relations of forgiving mercy to law! These questions are not immaterial, but the *spirit* of atonement is far more important than its method. The secret truth is this: crowned suffering; love bearing the penalty away from the transgressor, and securing his re-creation. Love bearing love; love teaching love; love inspiring love; love re-creating love—this is the atonement. It is the opening up of elements which bear in them cleansing power, inspiration, aspiration, salvation, immortality. It is the interior working force of atonement that we are most concerned in, though we are apt the least to concern ourselves with it.

Our practice, and knowledge, and intuition of love, and its

constituent elements and personal and administrative power, are very low. But, after all, love is the blood of the universe. It carries life, and repair, and healing every where, just as our food carries life, and repair, and healing throughout the whole body physical. And unless we understand the force of that love in character, in conduct, in our administration over ourselves, in the family, and in our affairs and estate, we fail to appreciate the peculiar characteristics, the internal and distinguishing elements of Christ's atoning love.

1. Hitherto religion, considered comprehensively and systematically, has not extended its force enough in the right direction. It has been a means of educating the conscience. Good men have been under the dominion chiefly of conscience since the world began; and although religion has in it, unquestionably, an element of education for the conscience, yet that is not the distinguishing element. Religion has been a code of rules for conduct; it has been a system of ethics or morality; it has been introduced into external laws, and institutions, and functions; and it is to-day, to a limited extent, an instrumentality for external re-creation; but this is only the lower and earlier development of religion. Religion, as a Love, taking precedence of all the other elements of the soul, asserting its authority, and compelling every thing else to bow to it, and to take law from it, has hardly been known, except in single individuals. It has been but little known as an idea, and still less as a practical matter. We have had sporadic cases, but it has never been to any considerable degree wrought into the public sentiment of any age. The active force of the world has never been this great motive-power of the divine government. Religion has spent itself in marking out right paths for conduct, or securing penalties, or building churches and ecclesiastical institutions; religion has spent itself in worship, in minor charities, in refinements, in a thousand beneficent ways, but it has not thus fulfilled its whole mission. The day, however, is coming when the Church, when religion itself, is to take on the form of suffer-

ing love. Men seek to shield their love from suffering, or, if it must suffer, they seek to reap the field for themselves. A love that suffers for others, not once, and by a heroic struggle, but always, and easily and naturally, is almost unknown. But there is to be a new disclosure in this matter. Much light has dawned; more is yet to dawn. And it is to come, not by dry mathematical problems; it is to come, not by the text; it is to come by putting on this suffering love of Christ Jesus! The full light is to come by development. Out of a nobler conception of love is to come nobler life—out of the experience of the full, tropical summer of sacrificing, suffering Love! And then the earth will put forth fruits such as were never suspected or dreamed of.

2. The great struggles that are going on in human life, the world over, are for the most part struggles after the manner of this world. We do not see far down the path of time. Two thousand years, almost, have rolled along, and we have not learned, in our efforts to reconstruct the world and regenerate it, to employ the peculiar elements of the Gospel, and we are working yet after the old natural methods. We are struggling as men of the world struggle. We are using force against force. There are conflicts of justice with injustice. There is the dashing of governments more or less right against governments more or less wrong. It is the era of legislation and convulsion. Industries are rising up at the bottom of society, and demanding that they shall have other rights. The poor and the ignorant in every land are beginning to demand recognition. Nations are demanding that their nationality shall be respected. A thousand questions are seeking adjustment; and, for the most part, these questions are seeking to adjust themselves by the application of physical force or by mere intellectual power. The world is making some progress, but only by hard working, accompanied by reaction, opposition, and conflict. God accepts these partial developments, for they belong to the lower and undeveloped conditions of human life and society; but they are on a plane below the Gospel.

I believe in war. I believe there are times when it must be taken. I believe in it as a medicine. Medicine is not good to eat, but when you are sick it is good to take. War is not a part of the Gospel, but while men and the world are traveling on a plane where they are not capable of comprehending the Gospel, a rude form of justice is indispensable, though it is very low down. If you go to a plane still higher, war seems to be a very poor instrumentality. And if you go yet higher, and higher, till you reach that sphere where the crowned Sufferer stands, how hateful and hideous war seems! In the earlier periods of society it is recognized as having a certain value; but its value is the very lowest, and at every step upward, till you come to this central, divine exhibition, it loses in value. Always it is a rude and uncertain police of nations. It is never good. It is simply better than something worse. Physical force is the alternative of moral influence; if you have not one you must have the other.

The day is coming, I think, when the Quaker idea shall have a new interpretation, a larger sphere; when men shall love their enemies, bless those that curse them, do good to those that hate them, and pray for those that despitefully use them and persecute them; when they shall receive injury and not resent it; when they shall requite wrong with love. To one who sees the revengeful, vindictive feelings of men; the volcanic heavings which are so common in the most harmonious families; how business is carried on regardless of rectitude; how governments in their course will hardly stop for justice; how in all departments of life the law of might is made the law of right—to such a one it seems almost absurd to hear a minister say that a day is coming when, the world over, the law of love shall be the reigning law. But that day *is* coming, or else prophecies are false, and Christ came in vain. That which we need, and that which we are yet to have, is the exemplification of this highest force—suffering love. That is the highest form of justice, and the highest form of administration. There is not, either this side of the

throne of God or beyond it, any thing else yet revealed or known so supreme and effective as suffering, love-suffering for others, rather than the making them suffer.

3. Men that mean to be Christ's reconstructors of the world must learn the secret of his power over the world. We are not to reform it by carnal logic. We are not to do it by the mere exposition of evil. I may lay a diseased man on the surgeon's table, and demonstrate morbid anatomy all day long; but it does not cure a man to demonstrate his disease. To reveal evil is not necessarily the way to cure it. They are not the men that are doing the world the most good who, as with a surgeon's knife in their mouth, go into society cutting and slashing, and making the blood flow on every side. Surgery is good in its place, but a man's head ought not to be a case of surgeon's tools. There are men who have an intense hatred of evil, and who make it their business to expose it, expound it, dissect it; they ridicule it, they condemn it, and denounce it; but such cormorants are employed of God only as he employs all mordant things. They are not his beloved instruments; for this world's need is not condemnation, nor denunciation, nor exposition. What it needs is somebody to suffer for it. What men need is somebody to suffer for them. Inexperience wants experience that is willing to bear with it till it learns. Hardness of heart wants softness of heart to teach it the quality of softness. Stumbling imperfection wants perfection to take it by the hand, and lead it in the right way. We have had thunder enough, and sword enough, and dungeons enough to reform the world a thousand times, if mere justice or mere force would do it; but these are not sufficient. The spirit which Christ manifested when, crowned with thorns, he suffered for others, is what we need. The mother-heart keeps alive in the world this secret of divinity; but kings, judges, magistrates, warriors, fierce with justice, fill the world with the sufferings of punishment. Some quail, some resent, and many grow desperate. Still justice is proclaimed. Justice, justice, justice!

As if justice itself was any thing but the birth of passions until it is the child of love! As if the rude justice of the earlier developments of society was to be exalted above love, to limit it, define it, subordinate it, and thus a mere leaf and stem arrogate superiority over that blossom and fruit for whose coming they were created!

We are not to expect to reform the world in which we dwell, either, by attempting merely to repair and mend its systems. *That* we shall do, but we must do *more*. "These things ought ye to have done, but not to have left the other undone." Why, my brethren, there is a way of forging justice that is better than picking up broken fragments of justice and putting them together.

When Cromwell's soldiers were in Winchester, they dashed out the cathedral windows, and the people were at a loss how to replace the saintly figures that lay scattered and broken on the pavement. Suppose some glazier had undertaken to put together again and cement the ten thousand fragments? He would have resembled those men who are going about and trying to find the fragments of justice, and to put them together. It is not patched justice that we want. What we want is an atmospheric power of development, like summer on a continent, to inspire growth away from passion and toward love. Love is the mother of all things. Justice and truth will spring from this divine weather in regal beauty and with hitherto unknown sweetness. We do not want glaziers, but inspiration. We need something higher than mending. We need soul-power. We need the power of God. We want God's creative power in Christ Jesus; and that is the power of a pure and great nature to suffer for impure and little natures.

Where shall we find that? Men that grow wise are apt to grow proud, and spend their time looking after their reputations. Instead of standing as light-houses in society, they carry themselves as closed lanterns. With their wisdom comes selfishness. And where shall we find men, that, as they

become wise, become thoughtful in regard to others, and willing to suffer for their sakes?

There are men that seek refinement all the world through; that seek grace of manner, and posture, and gesture; that seek whatever makes life elegant; but they seek them for themselves and their families, and call themselves "select," and will only associate with those that delight them as natural friends, and are ashamed to affiliate with those that do not belong to their set. Men are taking the powers of their being, both natural and acquired, and forming themselves into classes by themselves, studiously excluding the uncongenial, instead of employing their gifts to elevate and save those that are less fortunate than they. They withdraw themselves from the world as they become strong in the higher elements of their being. A man instructed in virtue, oh, how he abhors wickedness! A good man who would not break Sunday, how he hates Sabbath-breakers! He breaks a higher law in hating the Sabbath-breaker than he keeps in keeping the Sabbath. The man who loves the truth is apt not to be satisfied with hating lies, but hates liars. We are to hate wickedness, but not wicked men. Are you good? You owe it to that man who is not good to give your life for his life. He needs some one that is willing to suffer for him, and if you are to be his savior you must be to him what Christ was to those that he saved. I never saw the time when my heart rose up against men (and my heart carries tempests in it) that I was not rebuked by the thought, "How has Christ to bear with you?" I know my nature, and I know what a time Christ has had with me; and if he can afford to be patient with me, is there a man that I can not afford to be patient with?

My brethren, if we could have this nearer view of Christ, and bring it home, it would make us patient and forbearing with wicked men. By applying those precepts which Christ taught, and by cultivating those traits which he manifested, we shall come nearer to him than by mere prayer or ec-

static vision. We shall be like Christ in proportion as we are willing to suffer for others. It is the spirit of suffering love that brings men near to Christ Jesus, and makes them like him.

Who, then, are the world's regenerators? I do not call myself one of them. I know men in society whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose. It pleased God to put me in circumstances of ease; and though you contrive to give me some thorns, they are not half enough to make a crown of. Your kindnesses far outnumber them. And, so far as I am concerned, I do not suffer. I can not. I have to go out of my way to do it. But there is many a minister that works with his hands on week-days to earn his bread, and preaches every Sunday, and toils through obloquy from week to week, laying down his life for others. And nobody understands him, or praises him. He stands almost alone, suffering for his people. And I honor him, and look far up to him. Nobody may know him here, but he will be known *there!*

There is many a woman who has consecrated her virginity to those that have no mother; who seeks neither place nor praise; and who, by her example and instruction, is nourishing into refinement and excellence the children of others about her. She is a sufferer for others. She is one of those saints of the household that far surpass the saints of the church calendar!

There are many teachers that have taken their life in their hands, and abandoned wealth and luxury, and have gone to dwell with the poor freedman in his hovel, who has not learned enough to understand them; and they are despised; and by-and-by they will be pelted, it may be; and very likely they will shed their blood in attempting to give knowledge to those ignorant people.

These are the ones that are regenerating the world. These are the ones that are obeying the precepts and following the example of Christ. These are our exemplars. Their example is the best theology of our days.

It is a great thing to know how in love to suffer patiently, and give up one's life in suffering, for the sake of saving men from ignorance, and vice, and crime, and want. We shall never save any people, or any part of our states and nation, unless we can find those that are willing to do for them what Christ did for us—suffer for them, instead of making them suffer. And there must be this suffering of love all the world over, every where, or there will not be regeneration and peace.

Let me, in closing, bring this matter home as a test of personal piety.

Have you not been attempting to live a Christian life? And yet, when you have examined your interior consciousness, what have you found to be the drift of your life? Have you not sought to get rid of care, and been impatient under suffering? Have you not been inclined to get away from people because they vexed you? Have you been patient with men? Have you borne with their faults as Christ bears with yours? Have you carried their burdens as Christ carries yours? Have you ever coveted the privilege, as a part of your religious duty, of silently suffering for them? It seems to me that Christ has brought us a crown, and men have desired, as it were, with a pair of pincers, to pull out every thorn, and then they have put it on, and said, "Am I not like Christ?" But Christ's crown had thorns in it; has yours? When you are pierced by the thorns of trouble, do you not almost impute injustice to Providence? Do you not ask, "Why should I suffer?" Do you not say, "What have I done, that God should so afflict me?"

Consider Paul's view of suffering. He comes to us saying, "To you it is given"—this is the language of one who confers a reward; thus a monarch honors a well-beloved subject—"*To you it is given*"—what? an order? an office? an estate? no—"*to suffer with Christ!*" "If we suffer with him we shall reign with him." *He* shall reign who has worn the crown of thorns!

Are you not trying to build your nests high, and to feather them with down? Are you not trying to provide for the future, so that you shall escape trouble and care? Has the idea entered into your mind that suffering is the baptism of holiness? that it brings you into the likeness of Christ, and that it is to be, not suffering for your own sake, but suffering that other men may be wiser, and purer, and truer, and juster? Is this the foundation upon which you are building your activity? Can we be saviors of the world, and none of us be willing to suffer, and all of us be fierce for vengeance? Can we be saviors of the world, and all of us carry the whip of justice, and none of us carry the sweet incense and perfume of love? Shall all pulpits, all papers, all churches, all Christians of every name, clamor for justice, *justice*, JUSTICE, and not one speak of that crowned Sufferer who stood silent and meek, though the world thundered about him and rolled in upon him, and overwhelmed him even unto death? Go! go! ye sons of Zebedee, that want to stand high, but do not want to take the cup or the baptism!

But if any man would follow Christ, let him be silent in the presence of that most august spectacle of time—the Savior crowned with thorns!

PRAYER.

Thou hast entered into thy rest, Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. No more shall men pursue nor waylay thee. Never again shalt thou stand before the judgment of an earthly tribunal, nor bear the cross that crushed thee in bearing, nor suffer. For thou hast passed through Gethsemane and endured Calvary once and forever.

And now, lifted into eternal glory, with all power in thine hand, thou art not conscious of thine own pleasure and joy alone. Thou still dost behold the great race of man, that toils, and struggles, and sins, and suffers, and groans for redemption, and is without the knowledge of a Redeemer. Thou art bearing the world in the arms of love. Having finished thine earthly exhibition and atonement, thou art in thine own

peace working out peace for ages to come, and art out of thine own love pouring forth ceaseless tides of love that yet shall roll in the human soul as in thine. And though tears are yet in the world for numbers as the rain-drops; though sorrows are as the storms; though darkness yet rests upon the earth as a swaddling band, yet thou art the Deliverer. Into thine ear come the cries of the oppressed and the groans of the prisoner. Before thee, and beheld of thee, are all the ways of men. And their follies, their mistakes, their sins—thou seest these as they are portrayed in the ever-changing and ever-the-same panorama of experience. Unrolled as a scroll before thee is time, that comes and goes, and is forever present, bearing the same turbulent race, that know not what they are; that have not learned of God; that sometimes blindly seek thee, but that seldom find thee. And thou, O God, in thine infinite patience, in thy wonderful love, art still bearing this succession of generations of wounded, and weak, and wicked men. Even as "a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." And as a father chastiseth, so art thou chastising. We rejoice to believe that it shall not be always so. By-and-by shall come that glorious day when men shall know the Lord, when to know shall be to love, and when out of love shall spring obedience and joy. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Come to us that severally, in our own spheres, have our experience of sin, and temptation, and sorrow, and disappointment, our wrestlings, and our griefs. Come, we beseech of thee, to every wounded conscience, with the balm of forgiveness. Come to every benighted soul with that light which, once arisen, shall never set, but be the dawn of eternal life. Come with divine motives to them that are pulseless and know not how to stir. Rescue those that are tempest-tossed, and bring them safely to the shore again.

Be pleased, we beseech of thee, to comfort those that mourn, and to cheer the despondent. Breathe upon every soul in thy presence a sense of Immanuel—God with us. May we have this morning the sweet liberty of saying, in the fullness and realization of its blessedness, "Thy will be done." May we open our hearts, our understandings, our ambitions, our joys and pleasures, our plans and anticipations, all of them, to thy cleansing. And we beseech of thee that it may seem, as it is, that nothing on earth—no delight, no honor, no power, no joy—can be compared with those things which are to be found in the palace of the soul. We pray thee, lift up the gates, that the King of Glory may come into every heart

here to-day. Come in to cleanse and cast out; come in, as into a tabernacle, to build there thine own seat; come in to say, "Peace be unto you;" come in to break the bread of life to every longing soul!

May there be those this morning that, having known thee, and gone away from thee, and become strangers to thee, shall hear again, afar off, those accents that they once heard with joy unspeakable. May there be many that, having backslidden, shall review their life, and turn and come again to thee. May there be those that, having lingered in the precincts of the sanctuary, having at times almost resolved to be Christians, yea, having even tried and failed, shall to-day hear God calling to their soul in a voice not to be mistaken.

We beseech of thee, O Lord, that thou wilt grant to every one that is seeking to live a Christian life, greater light, more power of the Spirit of God, clearer views, ampler experiences in Christ Jesus. Be with those that are giving their testimony for Christ, bearing his cross, and upholding his cause. May they not be discouraged, and yet may they feel humbled on account of their unfaithfulness. And may they look with gentleness upon the shortcomings of others. May there be that same compassion in their souls toward their fellowmen which there was in the soul of Christ toward them. And may they, forgiven, not go out to take any by the throat and drag them to justice. May they evermore love, as Christ loves. May they have that love of Christ, as the principle of their life, which shall cleanse them while they cleanse others.

We pray that thou wilt be pleased to revive thy work in this church, and in all the churches of this city and of our whole land. And as thou hast wrought with a wonderful hand, in thy providence, leading this people as a flock, so now, by a more wonderful grace lead them, and lift up their hearts and souls into such communion with God, into such a sense of justice, and of that love which attempers it, that they may be able to meet all exigencies—to frame laws, to establish institutions of learning, and to send every where the preached Gospel—until this whole land shall know the Lord, and yield obedience to that which is right and true.*

May thy kingdom come in every land. Bless those that are preaching among the heathen. May they see of the travail of their souls, and be satisfied.

Bless all those that stand in desolate places, wellnigh dis-

* The civil war was ended and peace re-established at this time.

couraged. Lift upon them the light of thy countenance, and draw near to them with the blessings of thy salvation.

Bless all for whom we should pray. Look into thine own soul, O God, and take the measure of thy benefaction, not from our feeble petitions, but from the greatness of thine own desires. For thy name's sake, bless, forgive, and save. And to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall be praises everlasting. Amen.

IX.

The Lilies of the Field:

A Study of

Spring for the Careworn.

Delivered as a familiar Wednesday evening Lecture, in the Lecture-room of Plymouth Church. Mr. Beecher has a Farm near Peekskill, on the North River, where he usually spends a portion of the Summer. This Lecture was delivered at the close of a Spring day spent on the Farm. May 16th, 1860.

The Lilies of the Field.

"Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."—Matt., vi., 26, 28, 29.

I know he never was! nor has any body else ever been; nor will any body ever be. I can show you one apple-tree that puts to shame all the men and women that have attempted to dress since the world began.

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

Have you ever fulfilled this command? Have you, as a part of your obedience to Christ, taken time to sit down and think what birds and flowers mean? You have taken flowers, and you have enjoyed them—their forms, their colors, their odors—simply as objects which had a relation to a certain sense of beauty in yourself. That is very well, although it is the merest superficial treatment of that profound subject, and does not fulfill the command of God. The command of prayer, of meekness, of humility, may rank higher in the moral scale, but they are not one whit more commands than is this passage a command in relation to birds and flowers; and they do not address you one whit more than this does. "Consider." It is not *smell*, it is not *admire*, it is not *enjoy*, it is not even *look at*; it is consider. And to consider is to ponder; it is to take a thing up into your mind, and turn it over and over, that you may know what it means.

Do you observe how our Savior turned from revelation to revelation? Do you observe how, while he taught men by quoting to them the words of the inspired Testament which they had—for the New Testament was not then written; it was being lived, and it had not yet come to the period of record; so their only Testament was the Old Testament—do you observe how, while he taught men by quoting to them the words of the Old Testament, he also taught them by referring them to that other revelation, which is just as much God's, and has as universal a moral purpose, although it is not, perhaps, as easily comprehended?

This is the season of the year when, if ever, one must needs have his senses attracted. It is a peculiar year. More than any that I remember of my life is it a year of blossoms. I never saw any thing like it. I always knew that Nature was prodigal, because she was attempting to express God's thoughts; but I never knew before what she could do. I do not believe she ever knew herself! It seems to me as though the prodigality she displays is almost extravagant. Every twig is doubled and quadrupled with blossoms. The apple-trees stand almost like white clouds in the air, from the multitudes of their blossoms. Such is their profusion that you can scarcely see leaf or twig. All through the country it is so. The peach-trees are holding up their silent lessons in pink; the cherry-trees and the pear-trees are holding up their silent lessons in white; the apple-trees are holding up their silent lessons in both colors; all the grass is full of germinant flowers; and, since it pleased God to give us the rains of a day or two past, the grass is lifting up its hands, and clapping them for joy. Already the common birds are here—the several sparrows, the robins, the bluebirds, and the goldfinches or yellow-birds. The wanderers, also, are coming back. Last night I heard geese flying, and to-day the bobolinks were in the field. And almost every other bird that we shall have through the summer is present with us.

All day long I have been thinking—sometimes birds, sometimes Bible, sometimes flowers, sometimes Savior. It is difficult to tell where the transition is from one to the other. I have been sitting and looking at the meadows and at the trees, and thinking of the expressions in the Old Testament of the Psalmist, who spoke of the multitude of God's thoughts toward him. Innumerable, uncountable, are God's thoughts, and unspeakable is the tenderness of them.

In the human mind there are two tendencies in connection with the study of spiritual and physical things. One is to take the spiritual, and bring it down into physical forms. That is a process of degeneration. The attempt to understand spiritual things by bringing them down into physical forms, although it may be indulged in occasionally, and for special purposes, is, as a tendency, one of degeneration. The other tendency is to go from the material to the spiritual, thus spiritualizing the material. This is a process always of elevation. And as I sat and looked to-day at the meadows and at the trees, I thought within myself, "What message have they for me of my God, and from my God?" And all day long I have felt that never was there such an interpretation of munificence; that never was there any thing that so indicated what it was to give without money and without price—to give out of a nature whose spontaneity is generous, profuse, magnificent.

As, in wandering from one thing to another, I looked at the freshness of nature, and at the multitude of her children—those hidden in coverts, those under dark, cool rocks, those lain in where mosses are, those growing in the broad fields, those springing up under the shadow of forest-trees, and those suspended upon their boughs in the air—as I looked at all these things, I found I could scarcely estimate in one square yard where I sat how many notes God had rung, how many thoughts he had bestowed, how much care he had lavished, how much power he had exerted, and how much wisdom he had displayed. And there came to my mind such a sense of

God's overruling providence and presence as has made the whole day one of unexampled sweetness to me. There was not a single bird that I had time to hear—(for you must wake early, or you can not hear the birds sing in chorus; from four to five o'clock is the time for their family prayers, and they always have congregational singing then; if you miss that you will not hear any thing like it during the whole day, although during the whole day there is not an hour in which they are silent)—there was not a single bird that I heard that did not direct my thoughts to God. And all through the day, in the singing of the birds, in the blossoming of the trees, on the broad green sward, along the sides of the walls, skirting the edges of the woodlands, through the glades, in the air, on the earth, every where, it seemed as though God were almost so near that I should hear him, and see him, as certainly I felt him.

And what a joy there is in knowing that the earth is not merely something that God thought of when he made it, and, as it were, spun out of his hand, saying, "Go, take care of thyself;" but that it is God's daily care, that it is his estate, that he works it as I work my garden, and that he watches all things in it with that same interest with which I watch one plant after another that I mean to see blossom, and that I mean to help blossom! To me nothing makes the world so precious, nothing makes it so profitable, nothing makes it so little barren and so much rich, nothing so takes away its sordidness, as the knowledge of God's solicitude concerning it, and his care over it.

I do not believe that any one can fully read the natural world who does not read the Bible; and I am satisfied that no one can read the Bible to the best advantage who does not read the natural world a good deal. These things are very much to each other what blossom is to fruit, or what germ is to blossom. One, if not the cause of the other, helps to produce it. And so these two revelations—the external and the internal—work together, and both work to the same purpose.

But aside from these general thoughts of the significance of natural things, as made and preserved by the divine being, Christ teaches us not merely to look upon them, but to consider that they have a significance in our daily life. The general principle is this: that God cares so much for you that it is a shame for you to be uneasy and over-anxious about yourself.

There is nothing in the teachings of the Bible that tends to remove the stimulus to industry, or to take away the necessity of enterprise. It is neither industry nor enterprise that ever hurts any body. They are pleasurable and wholesome, and we shall not wish the motive which inspires them taken away. It is with men as it is with machinery. Every body that knows any thing about machinery knows that it wastes faster when it is allowed to stand still than when it is worked, if it is worked aright. If a watch stands still a year, it wears out as much as it would in running properly two years. But where machinery runs without oil, and squeaks and grinds, it gets hot, and wears out speedily. Now anxiety is in human life just what squeaking and grinding are in machinery that is not oiled. In human life, trust is the oil. Confidence in God is that which lubricates life, so that industry and enterprise develop the things we ought to have, and do it in such a way that they bring pleasure with them.

How many are there, however, who know how to apply this principle to their life, and who, being industrious and enterprising, are always cheerful, and cheerful on this basis: God takes care of me when I take care of myself? It is, after all, only God working in me when I work. What am I but a bundle of causes which God is making work? What are my wisdom, and thought, and skill but an outgrowth of divine wisdom, and thought, and skill? And those myriad conjunctions of which my life is being woven—who puts them into the loom? and who throws the shuttle? Not I, surely. All the events of my experience stand materially connected with thought, with applications of thought, and with results of

thought, with which I have nothing to do. Whatever I do, God opens the way for me to do. If I work figures, those figures were prepared by the forethought and prearrangement of my God. Although in what I do I work, God works more; and the very fidelity of my work is that I work in him, and that he works through me.

The teaching of Christ, then, is this: There is a providence, not a fatality, not a coercive necessity, but a broad, beneficent system of divine love, which has such a relation to you and to this world that you have no occasion to be uneasy. You can afford, when you have done your best, to be easy and enjoy yourself. Think, if you want to think, as long as it is pleasant to think; plan where you ought to plan; labor where you ought to labor; achieve where you ought to achieve; but thinking, planning, laboring, achieving, let all be done in a spirit of confiding trust. As little children will frolic, and play, and talk to themselves, and sing, and be happy, if every time they look up they can see their mother's form or shadow, or hear her voice, so we are, in God's greater household, to have such a consciousness of our Father's presence as shall make us happy, cheerful, contented in our sports and duties. We are dear to God. He will not forget us, nor cease to take care of us. We are so much more precious than many things which he never forgets, that we stultify ourselves if we refuse to be serene, as they are serene. Did you ever know a spring to forget to come? Did you ever know a spring in which the dandelions forgot to mock the sun with their little sparkling faces in the grass? Did you ever know a spring in which the ten thousand vines that creep along the breast of the earth, and send out their little flowers, in which the grass, or in which the mosses forgot their turn, and time, and function? God never yet let these things oversleep. He always calls them, and they always come. And he has been calling them, and they have been responding to his call, for six thousand years.

Now Christ says, "Are ye not much better than they?"

Yes, I hope so, though now and then I feel mean enough to say "no" to this question. Now and then I have such a sense of the poverty and the miserableness of human life that I am tempted to say that a man is no better than birds. When I consider what a man has had committed to him, and then consider what an unthrifty creature he is, how he has traded on the capital which God has given him, how he has diminished instead of increasing it, it seems to me as though birds were better than he. When I consider what inspiration we have had, what hope, what divine touch, what overpowering influence in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and then consider what a poor account we make of these things, I say "no" to the question, "Are ye not much better than birds?" A bird fulfills all that it was sent to do, and men do not. If I am asked, "Are you not much better than flowers?" I reply that if there is nothing in me better than I have thus far developed, then I can hardly be said to be better than even flowers; that is, considering that flowers answer the end of their constitution, and that I do not.

It is only when you come to consider, not merely our relations to this world, but our relations to the future; when, in contrast with our imperfections and ungrowth here, you consider our immortality in the world to come, that we seem better than birds or flowers. When you take in the root, and the stem, and the everlasting growth, and the fruit of human life, then are we not much better than birds and flowers? And if God takes care of birds and flowers, will he not take care of us? May we not at least have such an assurance of God's watchfulness over us that we can shake hands with care, and say, "I never will know you again?" May we not have such a trust in God that we can bid good-by to anxiety, and say, "I never will again bear your despotic burden?" Was it not for the very purpose of giving us such an assurance and such a trust that Christ gave us the passage of which I am speaking? Did he not design that we should rid ourselves of the harassing solicitudes and troubles of

life? Did not Christ mean that every day, when we lifted up our eyes and beheld the flowers and birds, we should recognize a remembrancer, saying to us, "Are ye not much better than they? And if I love them, and care for them, do I not love you, and care for you?"

Did God ever die for birds? Did he ever lay down his life for flowers, for the grass, or for the trees? But for us he did. And, rising, will he forget that for our sakes he himself was forgotten and laid in the sepulchre? By how many direct affirmations, by how many commands, by how many of these glancing and suggestive images, is this lesson brought home to us? And yet, is there one other thing so little heeded? Christian brethren, how many of you can say that you fulfill the wish of the apostle, when he says, "I would have you without carefulness?" How many of you are leading an unfretting, unanxious, a hopeful, cheerful life?

Let us for a moment, then, consider what are some of the reasons when we have such teaching as this, when we know the mind and will of God, that we are so little free from care and anxiety.

One reason, I suppose, is the inordinate desire which we have to attain certain objects of life—such, for instance, as wealth or honor. We are greedy, and we measure our prosperity by the relation which exists between our present condition and that which we desire to attain. If we are proud as well as greedy, we are always thinking ourselves to be ill used. We are not content to accept, for the time being, that lot to which we have come, and say, "This is a providential indication. Here I am, and here it was meant that I should be. I accept my lot as the hand of God laid it upon me." We over-estimate our own importance. There is an undue sovereignty which we mean to assert. We are determined to augment our resources. And we are perpetually measuring what we are by what we wish to be, and what we mean to be. We take away the satisfaction of the present by comparing it with the glowing and longed-for results of the future.

Another reason why we are not trustful and cheerful is that we believe that there will be fulfillments of the promises of God only in so far as we are able to understand his methods of fulfilling them. I have had a great many persons say to me, when I have propounded this faith to them, in view of their adversities and extremities, "I can not understand how there should be a special providence of God. I can not reconcile the theory of special providences with my ideas of general law, and of God's agency in nature." That is to say, when God lays down an unquestionable command, of the most explicit kind, unless you can go behind that command, and can find out the philosophy of it, you will not accept it at his hands! Simply as a thing commanded by your Father, you will not, with the faith of a child, accept it. If you can spin it on your wheel, and then weave it in your loom, and make it conform to your pattern, you will accept it; but as simply from the hand of God, you will not accept it.

Now I like to reason; I like to search out results from causes; but it is sweet, also, in the midst of the turmoils and troubles of life, to rest in faith in God. It is sweet to be able to say, "I do not care for to-morrow. I do not fear what shall befall me. I will trust in God." To understand the philosophy of a divine command, where I can, affords me satisfaction; but where a command comes from such authority, and with such variety of illustration in nature, as this one, I do not care whether I understand the philosophy of it or not. My soul is hungry for it, and I accept it because my God has given it. I trust and rest in God simply because he has said "You may and you must." That is ground enough.

Another reason why we are so borne down by care and anxiety is that we have not been trained.

We have been taught, but not trained. To teach is to convey ideas to the mind. To train is to bring the individual into the habit of putting those ideas in practice. No doubt we have been taught that we ought not to worry, and that

we ought to have a reliance upon God so supreme that it shall bring cheerfulness, and confidence, and rest to the soul, but we have not been so trained that we have formed the habit of putting that teaching into practice. One of those good, kind nurses, in whom the radiant fires of life have burned out; one of those round, sun-setting mothers, that glow without scorching heat; one of those rich, ripe, cheerful, sweet-speaking persons, that seem to carry blessings wherever they go—one such person, bringing up a child to take the individual events of life without fretting, or worrying, or feeling anxious, is worth more to him than all the preaching he could hear in his whole lifetime. To bring up a child in that way is to train him, for training is that which puts us in possession of the best gifts of God's teaching. Therefore it is said, not "*Teach* up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," but "*Train* up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Habits do not easily slip, but teaching does. If we would have rest and quiet in the midst of the trials and perplexities of life, we must not be forever looking out of the window of expectation, and scanning the horizon, to know what the weather is to be—we must not be forever searching for arguments of trouble in the possibilities of the future. Let this principle be taught to your children in such a way that to act upon it becomes a fixed habit with them, and it will be invaluable to them through life. No princely fortune could be such a boon to any man as a disposition or grace which should lead him to say, "God is my Father; I am heir with Christ of an eternal inheritance; and I can not be poor, I can not be forsaken." How valiant a man is who can say that!

I adopted this principle as much as twenty years ago as a rule of my life. I can almost remember the day when it became fixed upon my mind. I was living in the West, and was in straitened circumstances. I think that for a period of four years there had not been a time when some member of

my family was not sick from the malaria which prevailed in that part of the country. I did not expect or desire to be any thing except a missionary. I was poor, so far as money was concerned, but quite contented. But there came a time when it seemed to me that I should be ousted from even the humble berth I occupied, and I made up my mind that if I was, I would go to some smaller place where my services would be acceptable. The reason why I expected to be ousted was that I had attempted to stand up against the leading men of the vicinity where I was on the slavery question, at a time when the people of Indiana did not dare to say that their souls were their own, or that the negro's soul was his own. It seemed to me that my church would be shut up, and that I should be deprived of the means on which I depended for the support of my family. And I recollect that on a certain day, while reflecting upon the unhappy state of my affairs, I read this passage: "Let your conversation be without covetousness"—that is, Do not borrow trouble about where your salary is coming from—"and be content with such things as ye have." "Why, yes," I thought, "I have not many things, but I will be content with them." And now for the royalty of the reason for contentment: "For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." These words, as I read them, seemed as really a message from God to me as if the white form of an angel had spoken to me, saying, "Henry, I am sent to tell thee, from your God, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." And the rest of the passage is this: "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." I then thought, "Now, Mr. Elders, shut up the church if you have a mind to. I am not afraid of any man that lives, since I have this message from my God." It sank like a seed into my soul, and it has never been rooted out. If there is any text of the Bible that has been an anchor to me, it is that one. I have held fast by it through many a storm. It has held me a thousand times if it has once. I never think of it

that it is not to my soul like a touch on the keys of a piano. There is always music in it to me. "Let your conversation be without covetousness." Do not fidget, and worry, and vex yourself about how the ends are going to meet. You may be sure that they always will meet, though you may not always see how they can meet. If they do not meet in this life, a man dies, and then they meet. I used often to think, "If they do their worst, they can only kill me, and I shall thank them for that." When to shove a man through a door is to shove him into heaven, you can not do him any great indignity.

They that travel in pioneer countries have little axes slung across their shoulder, with which they can easily cut a path through a cane-brake, or make their way in the midst of the tangled undergrowth of a forest. One good text is enough for a man to cut his way through life with. One text like the one I have quoted to you, which will not break down, you may ride as a steed through the desert, through the populous city, through the world. One text that binds a man to God, and that makes him feel that in him he has a Father who wheels the bright army of the stars, who carries the globe in its revolutions, who is the controller of time and of eternity, who is the creator and sustainer of all mankind—one such text, oh, how it takes away care, and anxiety, and sorrow! How much food there is in your Father's house that you never tasted! In that house there is bread enough and to spare; and yet you go fretting and worrying through life, borrowing trouble about the future, with which you have no concern, and making yourself miserable in the present, with which you have all concern.

Now, when you go to your home to-night, will you try to make it brighter? It is not necessary that you should have more candles burning; or that you should make the floor cleaner—though that would do no harm; or that you should rub up your furniture; but, when you go to your home, will you carry the thought of God with you, caring for you, lov-

ing you, providing for you? In every night God is making a path by his hand for the morning and for you, and in every day God is making a bed of darkness for the night and for you. From day to day the speech of God is uttered, and from night to night divine knowledge is shown. And since you are guided by such a one; since all your paths are laid down by him; since he has made provision for you; since he has cherished you and nourished you; since he has comforted you with the assurances of his word; since, looking at the birds and flowers, he has said to you, "I will remember you, and I will do more for you than I do for these, because you are worth more;" since you are kept from year to year because God made you and cares for you—since these things are so, need you have any fears that you will not be divinely cared for in the future? Oh, what beautiful messengers those are that sit on two legs, fly with two wings, and send out of one little throat a whole breastful of texts, each one of which is a song of God to the believing soul! I heartily thank God for them!

I promised myself to-day that I would come down and say some of these things to you from the hill-side where my family are stopping, but I have not expressed one in ten of the thoughts that I meant to when I was among the things that inspired them. If I had had you on the lawn I think I could have preached to you, but to-night it is dry work. However, you must do your own preaching. To-morrow, even in the city, you can not but see the amazing bounty of God; and if you will step out toward the suburbs of the town—and you can, if you will but rise early enough, without any prejudice to your ordinary work or to your health—you will gain some idea of the boundlessness and profusion of that bounty, as exhibited by the flowers in the country. And whenever you see flowers, understand that there is a meaning in them, and remember that Christ has said, with reference to them, "Consider." You have no right to pass by the smallest, the tiniest, the most inconspicuous flower,

and say, "Oh, it is a little common flower." A common flower? It is God-opened, and God-built, and Christ has said respecting it, "Consider." Yes, there is a meaning in flowers. It is a precious meaning—one that you need, and one that will kindle up your life, and make your soul glow with radiance. Take it, and profit by it.

"Behold the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns."

I thought of that to-day; for when I was very busy sowing some seed, a bobolink flew over my head with a wild, sarcastic descant, as much as to say, "Go on, old clod-crusher! you sow, and I will rejoice." He flew past, and I understood him.

"They sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, oh ye of little faith?"

PRAYER.

We rejoice, O Lord our God, that thou hast endowed us with reason, and with some of thine own attributes, so that we are not inspired to speak or chant thy praises blindly. We rejoice that we are taken up into communion with thee; and though yet we are in the shadowy land, and all things are comparatively vague, we know that there is right, and justice, and love, and purity, and sympathy with thee. We know the royalty of that nature of love which spends itself, and forevermore renders service to the needy; and though by searching we can not find thee out unto perfection, we find out enough for joy and consolation, enough for inspiration and imitation; and all our life long thou art stimulating us by the bright conception of thine own nature, and drawing

us toward thee, that we may become more and more like thee. Accept our thanks, O Lord our God, for this revelation of thy parentage, and for that spirit of adoption which thou dost breathe into our hearts. Every day, now, our souls call thee "Father." Every day we walk with growing confidence and hope. Every day thou art ripening in us that love that casts out fear—servile fear, ignoble and selfish fear—and art planting in us that higher fear which love breeds, the fear of grieving or wounding the one we love. Thus thou art ministering to the sources of our inward life, and making more powerful the shadowy realm of thoughts and feelings, of heart-resolves and aspirations, than is the measured life of things without, so that the things that seemingly are not are mightier than the things which are. Thou art, by the glorious power of weakness, destroying strength. Thou art filling our emptiness with thyself, so that our very infirmities and our very wants are becoming our blessings. We thank thee for that wondrous way in which thou hast led us, and for all the unfulfilled and spoken promises that yet await us. We rejoice that there can be no fulfilling of thy promises—that they are, as they empty themselves, filled again, and are inexhaustible.

So, O Lord, thou art leading us day by day, not wearied with thy work. Thou art not weary of giving, nor weary of watching, nor weary of forgiving. Thou art not weary of bearing us. Thou dost carry us in the arms of thy love, an everlasting tax and burden unfelt. We rejoice in this wonder of divine and all-merciful love and care.

And now grant that the time past may be sufficient in which we have disregarded thy authority. May we begin with more implicit confidence to lean upon thy bosom, to trust thee in present troubles, and to rely upon thee in the future. May we be delivered from those fears that populate the future, and that rise to threaten us. We have seen how they vanish as they draw near. We have seen that they are but mists and shadows that disappear of themselves. Grant that we may learn wisdom at length, and hear thee saying, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." May we rest on those promises of thy providence and care, those assurances of thy fidelity and watchful love. And whatever may be the ills that threaten or betide us, that touch us or reach toward us, may we have that quieting faith in thee that shall hush our apprehension, and give us that peace which they have that love and trust thee. We bear thee witness that thou hast sustained us in all our troubles. We bear thee

witness that thou hast done abundantly more than we asked or thought in days past. O that we might at last have faith given us to trust thee! Thou that art infinitely more than the noblest among men—infinitely more just, more noble, more faithful, more tender, more generous; thou that art the fountain whence springs all our conceptions of magnanimity, grant that we may treat thee at least as well as we treat each other. We take each other's word, we walk upon the strength of each other's promises—forbid that we should only fail when it is God that promises.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to every one in thy presence. Minister to them according to the abundance of thy goodness. We ask blindly. We know not what to ask for as we ought. We frequently would minister to our own evil. We beseech of thee, O God, that thou wilt grant the wisdom of thine answer as a supplement to the folly of our asking. Do for us the things that we need, and withhold from us the things that are harmful. We pray thee, whatever thou takest away from us, that thou wilt not take away the certainty of thy favor, and the assurance of immortal life; and whatever thou dost put upon us of trouble, we beseech of thee that thou wilt not forbear burdening us with cross upon cross. Grant that we may have so much as is necessary for our soul's salvation. When we are chastened by the Lord, may we remember the hand; may we remember the heart; may we remember the covenant of love; may we bear our chastisement and drink the cup.

We pray that thou wilt grant that any that sit in darkness may see a light arise upon their path. May any that are care-worn and burdened begin to find that under a crown of thorns there may be royalty. Are there any in thy presence that are pursued by fears and threatenings? Thou, O Lord, canst deliver thy darling ones from the lion and the bear. We beseech of thee, pluck those out of the snares and toils of temptation that are thralled therein. Are there those that are perplexed as to duty, that know not the way of right? Wilt thou give them disclosures of duty and of right? Are there any that see the right way, and fain would walk therein? Wilt thou grant, O God, that they may be able more and more to approach the true path, and to be established therein? Appoint thou their goings for evermore.

We pray that thou wilt bless all whom we love. Gather underneath thy ordainings of blessing all whom our hearts gather in fond remembrance to-night; and wherever they are—afar off in distant lands, or upon the sea, or in the wilder-

ness, or in places of peril—God grant that they may receive to-day, and this hour, the blessing of the sanctuary. Grant unto them, we beseech of thee, faith, fidelity, firmness unto the end.

Bless our land in this time of our darkness.* May we have faith that there yet shall be the bright dawning of the morning of hope in this day of sorrow and distress. O may we have assurance that, though there be weeping in the night, joy shall come with the morning. And we pray, O God, that thou wilt grant that slavery may cease, and that all the evil plans that are built for it may be utterly destroyed. Thou God of justice and truth, who hast inspired in the human breast the hope of a glorious future, who hast been stirring up the nations of the earth through centuries to rise to nobler and nobler tasks and attainments, be thou on the side now of those that seek to carry forth thine own blessed truths and to realize thine own inspired ideas. And we pray that thou wilt not give thy cause to contempt. Let not thine adversaries laugh. And we beseech of thee, O God, that thou wilt so appear for the oppressed that all shall stand in awe of thee, and, beholding the work of righteousness that thou hast done in this nation, admire, revere, and praise. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done in all the earth, as it is done in heaven, and to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

* The civil war was in progress at this time, 1864. The emancipation proclamation had been issued.

X.

The Hidden Manna

and

The White Stone:

A Sermon of Christian Experience.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, July 1st, 1866.

The Hidden Manna and the White Stone.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."—Rev., ii., 17.

This text is a solemn call to victorious perseverance in Christian life. As a motive, two promises are made—one of *hidden manna*, and the other of *an unknown name upon a white stone*. One refers to the past, the other to the future. The one is founded upon fact, the other is mystical. Let us elucidate a little each of the figures, and derive from them such spiritual profit as is appropriate to them respectively.

The Israelites, who were God's typical people—not his only people, but the people by which pre-eminently he developed and made known the moral side of truth—had been cruelly oppressed and held in bondage in Egypt. We are not left to our own fancy when we say that this is, spiritually, the experience of all men, for the New Testament appropriates that historic condition. We, too, are represented as being in bondage, or as having been in bondage. Whom a man serves, to him he is in bondage; and we have been under the dominion of the world, under the power of our appetites, under the control of our own propensities, and so we have been in Egypt.

God appeared in a special and glorious manner, and set his people free, and brought them forth with a high hand and an outstretched arm from Egypt; and so, with a continuous parallel, it is represented in the New Testament that the Christian is brought from the house of bondage into light and lib-

erty; for in the New Testament, though religion is sometimes represented as a service, at other times, and more comprehensively, it is represented as an enfranchisement, as an act of emancipation, as freedom conferred, as liberty achieved.

When the Israelites had been delivered from their pursuers and had crossed the sea, instead of making straight for the promised land, they took counsel of their fear and their love of ease, and were obliged, in consequence, for forty years to wander up and down through the great desert land. But at length, after a generation had perished, after those that first set out had, as a punishment of their cowardice, died in the wilderness, the people came into the promised land, where long ago they might have been settled. And so those that have been brought out from under the dominion of their sins into newness of life, through Christ Jesus, instead of aiming at once at the highest Christian states, attempt to avoid, as much as they may, labors and self-denial, and, in consequence, impose upon themselves the very things which they seek to avoid, and make their life a life of wanderings in the desert. They may well be compared to the children of Israel who wandered in the wilderness of Arabia. In old age, often, God's people only at last, as the sum of all the conflicts of their life, reach that which they should have stepped into almost at the very beginning of their Christian course. If men had Christian enterprise, Christian courage, Christian fidelity, they might begin, at the very beginning of their Christian experience, where, in the ordinary course of things, they end after scores of years.

During this long pilgrimage of the Israelites it was impossible for them to sow and to gather harvests. They were dwellers in tents. They had been shepherds and husbandmen; but they could not pursue for a livelihood their old avocations. It was needful, therefore, that there should be a supply granted to them miraculously; and by divine command manna fell daily from heaven. They gathered it each day for the day's use, and on the day preceding

the Sabbath for two days, that the Sabbath might be unbroken.

And the revelator says, "I will feed conquering Christians with manna." As we are like the Israelites in bondage, in deliverance, and in wandering in the wilderness, "so," saith the revelator, "the parallel shall continue; and as God fed his people, not through their own skill and industry, but by a direct power, so God promises that those who are victoriously faithful in the Christian life in all their wanderings and vicissitudes shall have divinely-bestowed manna."

But, lest it should seem as though it was to be a repetition of the old miracle, it is declared that it is not to be substantial and visible manna, such as the Israelites plucked from the ground, but "hidden," or secret manna; that is, invisible, spiritual manna, in distinction from that which is visible and material. Heavenly cheer, spiritual comfort, the soul's bread —that is the manna which is here promised.

Let us then see, for one single moment, what is the scope of this promise. *To them that overcome I will give hidden manna.* The implication is that Christians are in great conflict and peril, and that, in consequence of the strifes and dangers of Christian life, they need something more than they can minister to themselves. They need food that is better than the daily bread for which we are taught to pray. And the promise is that, if they are faithful in their Christian life, God will give them this other food that they need.

It is only a mystic and poetic expression of the same thought that our Savior indulged in when he declared, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" "but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Here the same truth is set forth in another mode of expression, namely, Fight the battle of temptation, wage the conflict of Christian life, be bold, be faithful, and God will feed your souls. As in the one case God will take care of the body according to the

literal promise of Christ, so here we have included something higher and better. Be faithful to all your Christian duties and affections, and God will feed and strengthen every power of the soul.

We are incessantly tempted, in this life, to conform our ethical conduct either to our direct or implied physical condition. There is a natural, but not too good tendency to make the metes and bounds of ethical truth and duty conform to natural law, and then to interpret natural law on the side of selfishness. We are perpetually tempted by compliances, by customs, by seeming physical necessities, by social sympathies, and even by moral biases, to depart from propriety and rectitude. In all the relations of life—in the family, in the neighborhood, in business, in their whole estate — men are strongly inclined, if not to give up right and duty, yet to moderate their ideas of what is right; to take on milder conceptions of duty; to see if the cross can not be evaded or avoided, or to make it as inconspicuous as possible. That tendency is natural, using the word *natural* in its lowest acceptation.

There is always present, more or less obtrusively, the economic argument in the soul, and we find ourselves resorting to it to excuse ourselves from adhering to that which is incumbent upon us. When we are irradiated with conceptions of Christian life, when we have heroic ideals, we mean to be absolutely true men; we mean to have an unadulterated faith in God; we mean to have the utmost sincerity of life; we mean to burn with a courage that shall never know a decline; we mean to be enterprising, abounding in work. And yet, when we come out of the inspired hours that come to us, and enter upon the daily duties of life, we come into the economic and argumentative mood, and the question arises whether it is proper in our circumstances—which are always peculiar—for us to do so and so. And in this mood we are tempted as much as possible to avoid the cogency and urgency of the reasons which incline us to fulfill our duties, and to argue whether it is best for us, for ours, and for the

world about us, to press forward in the path of duty which is opened before us.

Now I do not undertake to say that these casuistical questions are not a part of our necessity, but I do say that the application of truths and principles requires right judgment and the continuous exercise thereof. It is not half so much trouble to know what the truth is in general as it is to know what the truth is at any particular time, and in its applications to particular phases of experience. And it is at this point, not that we are necessarily deceived, but that we are extremely liable to lean toward a compliance with worldly ways and customs, for the sake of getting along easier, for the sake of having more certain, solid, assured success.

"Man shall not live by bread alone," said the Savior, when he was himself tempted. And the promise of our text is, Do not comply with evil under any circumstances; do not give way to worldly counsels where they are distinctly opposite to spiritual counsels; do not consume yourselves with anxieties; do not use your strength needlessly; do not expend it on this thing or that, when it might be better spent on something else; do not judge your prosperity by outward signs alone; and you shall have your reward. I will give to every man that is a true soldier—to every man that holds the faith of Christ, and that means to maintain a godly and pure life—to every such man, whatever may be his trials, his perils, and his inducements, if he will only overcome his temptations, I will give a hidden support. I will feed him inwardly. As the Israelite had visible manna, so he shall have manna that is invisible, hidden, mystic.

I would to God that in some adequate way the experience of this truth might be gathered out of that army of suffering ones that the world has seen, and framed into a history, and poured forth upon men, that the world might know how God does do exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think for those that are willing for Christ's sake to cut off the right hand, or pluck out the right eye, or forego any temptation or any inducement of pleasure.

There is nothing that seems more foolish to men of the world than for a man to stand, as it is said, *in his own light;* for a man to give up positive, and in many respects, it may be, innocent good, for the sake of some notion, some ism, some moral scruple. But yet it has been the experience and the testimony of more than one can count of blessed saints in heaven, and of multitudes that still dwell upon earth, and are engaged in its conflicts, that, no matter how rugged or steep the path may have been, they have been best fed and best sustained when they have followed Christ the nearest. I will not say that those who follow Christ at all hazards will be best sustained outwardly (though they will have enough for their outward wants, or, when they do not have this, what is better, they will die), but they will have, in spite of their circumstances, more of those ends for which men strive than they could have attained if they had conformed to the world.

Why do men strive? There is a pleasure in the use of our faculties that makes men industrious and enterprising, that leads them to become engineers, mechanics, laboring men, or scholars. There is pleasure in a life of activity. But mainly men are living for the sake of supplying themselves with a multitude of worldly benefits; that they may have a broader foundation for their family; that they may, if possible, derive more enjoyment from leisure; that they may multiply the sources of their improvement. In other words, various joy, that shall develop the mind and fill up the heart, and the evading of evil, which is a reflex seeking for possible joy—these are the springs, the grand motives of human action; and when you take away from a man the fear of evil and the hope of joy, you paralyze him. No man would be more than a leaf on a stream that had not this fear or this hope.

Now it is the experience of men, and one of those experiences which we come to slowly and reluctantly, and which dawn upon us only after we have gone through a long course of struggle, that, after all, we find more happiness in the faithful performance of Christian duty at every hazard and sacri-

fice than we would have found with unobstructed freedom along the course of prosperity.

Let me take the case, for instance, of a man that pursues the most innocent course of life. It is thought of industry that it is good, right, praiseworthy. It is. But, little by little, a man, in the course of duty, perils himself for others' sake, and begins to undermine his health and strength. He would draw back, but there is an obligation imposed upon him. He is a soldier, in time of war, and he is called to do duty in places of danger, and to sacrifice his bodily health. And, ere long, by maims and wounds, or by rheumatic twistings and contortions, or by organic weaknesses, the man is laid aside from labor. And men say, "It is a pity that this man should not have avoided this excessive taxation upon his physical system. There is moderation in all things." But I have taken notice that, when it is moral things, moderation is known to all men; but when it is physical things, moderation is known to nobody. There is a general public sentiment that zeal and fervor for the animal system is all right enough, but that for the moral nature there should be great moderation and self-restraint. And so men look with pity upon a man that has been laid aside from activity by reason of over-exertion in the discharge of the most solemn duties that can be known in the providence of God.

It is hard to stand still enforcedly. It is hard to see the thunderous processes of industry go past your skilled hand and willing feet, and you not be called to take part and lot in them. And yet many a man has learned, after the first days of bitterness, that he could reap more joy bed-ridden than he could on his feet. In many a case, helpless hands, that could not be lifted even in prayer, have reaped better harvests, if you measure by the soul's satisfaction, than they could under any other circumstances. Many a man that has been laid aside early in life, and for long and useless years, has realized, without knowing it, the promise of God, "I will give you hidden manna." And I call, from thousands and

thousands of cottages, and prisons, and poor-houses, witnesses to rise up, among the most ghastly to the eyes of men, but the brightest and purest to the eyes of God and angels, to testify, "Of all that live on earth we have been the most favored, and we have the most peace, the most joy, the most deep meditation of good, the most hope, the most certainty of eternal reward."

It is the royal road to learn of love. Is there any thing better than that a man should love his wife, or that a woman should love her husband? Is there any thing nobler than the love which they give to their children? Is there any thing that is a more fit emblem of heaven than a Christian family, where conscience, and knowledge, and pure and true love unite all the members of it? And may not a man say, with some reason, "Let us build here three tabernacles, and abide in this paradise of God?" But in the providence of God one child dies, and another child is prostrated with sickness, and alienations come in to disturb the peace of the family circle, and the household is divided and scattered, and the paradise is invaded, and thorns and thistles come up where were blossoms and fruit. Under such circumstances a man is tempted to charge God falsely. And where there has been such temptation, and waste, and sickness, and desolation, and the heart has been burdened with sorrow, and the head has been bowed down with grief, and suffering has written its lines on the face, at last, though for the present these things are not joyous, they begin to bring hunger for that which the earth can not supply, and to cause the soul to cry out, "O God, feed me, and give me the hidden manna out of the cloud and darkness," and, in answer, come divinely-supplied patience, and peace, and inward joy. How many persons have at last borne witness, "I have learned what I could not have learned if I had been spared from sorrow!"

There is nothing that is better, seen from a purely economic point of view, than to build up society by material productions and external wealth. Far be it from me to say a word

that undervalues these things; but you know very well that we are dwelling in communities where every thing is as uncertain as a shepherd's tent. You build up your fortune, and God takes it down almost as often as the patriarchs did their tents. You are feeding from pasture to pasture. You are finding that here and there God meets you with overthrow and reverse. And you feel, "To what profit is it that I have served God? What is there for me, whose whole life seems cross-plowed and harrowed?" You are tempted to complain of the allotments of Providence. But do you suppose a man's life consists in the abundance of the things that he possesses? Is this your estimate of man, that he is merely a thing to put raiment on? Is it your idea of life to build a treasure-house and put gold in it? Have you never had a conception of the royalty of sonship, and learned to love God and your fellow-men? And, though all your worldly possessions have been scattered, is there nothing left for you? Are you bankrupt because you have neither silver nor gold? Why, you have come to that state in which all the holy men on earth were! Prophets, patriarchs, apostles, ministering teachers of God, and the best men that have dwelt upon the face of the earth, had not where to lay their heads. Silver and gold had they none, but they had manhood; they had courage; they had the power to sing and pray like Paul and Silas in the midnight prison; they had that which enabled them to influence men for good. There are many such nowadays. To them I say, bear this witness among your fellow-men: "God comforts me; he makes my life better than any power on the globe could make it; food which no man can give gives he me—hidden food, soul-manna. And so I am sustained in going through persecutions for righteousness' sake."

Who is there that does not know that there is a joy higher and more stately than is known to our ordinary experience? There are some natures that only tempests can bring out. I recollect being strongly impressed on reading the account

of an old castle in Germany with two towers that stood up mighty and far apart, between which an old baron stretched large wires, thus making a huge æolian harp. There were the wires suspended, and the summer breezes played through them, but there was no vibration. Common winds, not having power enough to move them, split, and went through them without a whistle. But when there came along great tempest-winds, and the heaven was black, and the air resounded, then these winds, with giant touch, swept through the wires, which began to ring, and roar, and pour out sublime melodies.

So God stretches the chords in the human soul which ordinary influences do not vibrate; but now and then great tempests sweep through them, and men are conscious that tones are produced in them which could not have been produced except by some such storm handling.

Are there not those that can bear witness here to-day that a man may lose all things, in the common acceptation of the term, and yet be exceedingly happy and blessed of God? A man may be stripped of property, may be bereft of friends, may lose his health, may have the way of usefulness blocked up to him, and yet he may experience a happiness that is indescribable if he only has left this thought: "Heaven can not be touched. On earth I am tossed about and rolled over, and am like a vessel borne down before a tempest, and swept hither and thither; but ah! there is a rest that remaineth: God keeps it for me, and ere long I shall reach it! I am sure that I am a better and happier man by reason of the things which I have been made to suffer, since they have rendered my soul susceptible to the mysterious touches of God's hand." It is the fulfillment of the promise, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." The man that is willing to stand up wherever, in the providence of God, his lot may be cast, and that stands victoriously, God will feed, not outwardly alone, but inwardly.

Now comes the other mystic promise of something nobler

yet. The explanation that I shall give of the *white stone, with the name which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it*, will seem fanciful to you, unless you think of the difference which there is on this subject between modern Occidental thought and ancient Oriental thinking. But no one who is acquainted with the sentiment of antiquity will think this explanation fanciful, for precious stones were almost the very form of literature for the expression of the idea of precious truths—so much so that God, when he wished to describe how heaven itself was built, instead of saying that it was a building whose tower was justice and whose foundations were mercy, and love, and sympathy, described it as built of sapphire, and ruby, and other precious stones.* Precious stones were identified with great moral truths and qualities. Just as we say *ermine* in referring to the office of a judge or magistrate, just as we speak of white fur as signifying purity, so to the ancient, the Oriental, a precious stone was associated with moral truths and moral qualities. And God speaks in conformity to this use of precious stones in representing such truths and qualities. They were largely employed in the description of heaven, whose walls, it was said, were of jasper, and whose pavements were likened to a sea of glass.

But, more significantly, though less poetically, perhaps, precious stones were set, and worn as breast-stones. All the Jewish priests wore them. On the ephod they were placed. And kings wore them. Now, in modern times, they are worn merely for show; but then they were worn to signify moral and regal qualities. Crowns carried them symbolically, much as in coronets they still flame.

But more frequently than in any other way precious stones were made into signet-rings, and, as such, they carried authority, because they suggested the personal identity of the wearer. Where precious stones were set as signet-rings, they were worn, probably, in part, on account of their brilliancy, and for mere private and personal pleasure; or else they were

* Revelation, xxi., 18–21.

presents given as tokens of ordinary regard by neighbor to neighbor, or friend to friend; or else they were bestowed as honors. Where a prince or a monarch desired to confer the highest testimony of his appreciation of one that had served him or the kingdom, he gave him a precious stone, with his name cut on it.

But a more precious use of these stones was as love-tokens, and in this case they were cut with mystic symbols. As two lovers agree upon names the meaning of which is known only to themselves, or as they speak to each other in endearing terms which belong to them severally, not in baptism, not in common parlance, but by the agreement of the heart, so it was customary to cut in stone names or initials which no one could understand but the one who gave it and the one to whom it was given.

Now these last two uses of precious stones—that by which monarchs conferred honor upon their favorites, and that by which lovers gave token of their affection for each other, with names inscribed, and known only to love—are blended. And this, I apprehend, is the origin of the figure of our text, "To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." God says, "I am the eternal King, and I am the eternal Lover, and to him that is faithful to me, and that overcometh, I will give, as a token of my love and honoring, a white stone." What is meant by *a white stone* I do not know, but I prefer to think that it was an opal—the most human of all stones. The diamond is the more spiritual—there is less of color and more of suggestion in it; but the opal has in it more sympathy, more feeling, more wondrous beauty, more of those moods that belong to the human heart; and of all the stones that are worn to signify human affection, none is to be compared to the opal. And methinks, when God makes this promise of the white stone, it is as if he said, "I will cut your love-name in an opal, and as your King and Lover I will give it to you, and no man shall know the meaning of that name but you yourself."

That which love and power bestow on their favorites, and which fills men with joy and rejoicing, God says he will bestow on every soul that overcometh, and is true to itself and to God. To all those that are faithful in his cause he promises the name, engraved, by which he himself will call them —a new name, written; that is, etched, cut, ground.

I am fond of thinking, in this matter of writing that new name, that it will grow out of circumstances. Two, walking together and discoursing of love, meet, perhaps, some experience like this: A bird, hawk-chased, flies down, and, with wondrous confidence, seeks the bosom of the fair one as a protection. She rescues it. It is in the moment of high discourse, and both are strangely struck and thrilled by this incident, and it is agreed that it shall be significant of their affection; and this sparrow or thrush becomes associated with their personal history.

Or, it may be, lovers walk the field. It is the hour of the disclosure of their highest and purest feelings one toward the other. And as they sit and talk of love, they are unconscious that lilies are blooming about them on every hand; but by-and-by, rising, they perceive that the lilies have been the witnesses of their vows and joy, and from that moment they never can dissever the thought of the lily from the memory of that hour.

Now I think that the letters that are to constitute the name of Love are to grow out of some such circumstances. God puts his disciples through one experience of life, and one of the letters which are to spell that name is ground into the stone; in another experience another letter is ground in; and in another, another is ground in, until by-and-by, with the attritions and discipline of life, God, by the cunning and skillful hand of providence, has cut out, on this white and precious stone, the whole name of Love, and thenceforth it is worn as a testimonial of God, and of the joy and delight of the soul.

Are there, then, those that suffer in their faithfulness, and are conquering in their sufferings, or rising above them?

Are there others that in the performance of duty know how not only to labor, but the harder task of patience when labor is forbidden? Are there others that know how to gather and administer property, but who can bear witness, "I know, also, how to do more than that; I know how to walk unclothed, and lose not one particle of my joy, and peace, and manhood, and to be stronger, more hopeful, and more songful than I ever was before?" Are there others that know how to walk in unhealth and pain, and yet to be so penetrated with faith, and prayer, and love, that their life is more radiant in sickness than the life of ordinary men is in health? Are there those that know how to administer in the common realm of affection, but that, by bereavements and infelicities of life, have learned also how to dismiss love, to go widowed and solitary, and how to do it with such a sweet and noble temper that all men shall see that they are more lovely without love than they ever were when they were enthroned in its midst? Are there those in the battle of life who are tempted, and who overcome the temptation? Are there men that are bankrupt, and that are walking in obscure places, and that remember the promises of God?

Be faithful to Christ; be faithful to the truth; be faithful to your honor and integrity; be faithful to heaven, that is nearer than when you believed; be faithful to all right things that you have been taught; be faithful in the discharge of every duty, and then rejoice! And when you can not rejoice in any thing else, rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in wealth; rejoice in health; rejoice in pleasure; rejoice in love; rejoice in activity; but, above all, rejoice in the Lord; and then, when reverses come, and troubles press upon you, and these other things fade away, your joy in the Lord shall stand like Mount Zion, that never shall be moved.

If we had nothing to show but a well-ordered life, that would not be much; but a joy that never proceeds from the ordinary provocatives of joy is better testimony to our children and to the world of the power of grace than any thing

else. If you are serene, and are surrounded by the comforts of life, people say, "Oh yes, I do not wonder that he is happy. I should be happy if I were in his place. Fill my cellar with wine, and my gallery with pictures, and my library with books; fill my house with welcoming friends, and with many tokens of neighborly respect, and see if I will not be happy." "Ah!" men say, "it is not much for one that has health, and wealth, and strength to be cheerful and happy." But when a man stands in darkness, and poverty, and contempt; when he sees the whole community swept like a tide away from him; when he sees his friends turn their backs on him and leave him, and yet he never loses his courage or temper, and is as sweet-minded as ever, and says, "I am as happy as ever I was, and as hopeful and cheerful; for God is my support, he is my lover; he fulfills his promises to me, and he gives me the hidden manna, and also the white stone, on which my well-understood love-name is written"—*there* is a testimony that the world can not mistake; there is something mysterious and awful in this! There is something in the idea of the soul's communion with the other life that carries a kind of terror to those that are strangers to it; but there is in it a wonderful depth and power to those with whom it is a familiar experience.

Ah! my Christian friends, give up the outside, if need be, that you may get at the inside. Let your life be hid with Christ in God. Its disclosure here is but premonitory; not without its value, and not to be undervalued, but of little account as compared with its appearing in heaven. Take hold of the other life, believe in it, dwell in it, and God shall ere long bring you to it.

PRAYER.

We bless thy name, thou all-giving Father, that thy mercies have come to us in a stream that ceases not, and that will flow on forever. Giving doth not impoverish thee, and withholding doth not make thee rich. Thou art bounti-

ful, and knowest of thine own self that it is more blessed to give than to receive. And this is our hope — the unfailing mercy of our God! Thy thoughts will never cease to us-ward. Thy providential care shall never remit its charge, and all thy purposes of grace shall stand. Thou hast decrees, and no one shall disannul them. We rejoice that with thee is plentiful power; that with thee is wisdom to direct; that with thee is all goodness; that every thing which we lack thou hast in abundance. And we rejoice that it is thine office and thy delight to minister unto men; for the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Thou art serving us; thou art our server. We are as children whom parents care for and serve in all the humblest offices of necessity; and thou as Father art bearing us in thine eternal arms of care and love. And herein is our stability, herein our hope, for we trust thee for what thou art. It is impossible that thou shouldst forget us till thine heart forgets to love. We bless thy name that thou hast made known to us thy nature. We thank thee that thou hast disclosed it to us in the life of Jesus Christ our Savior. We bless thee that thou hast made it known by the communications of the Holy Ghost, and hast given us personal experiences so many of the love of Jesus to our souls. We have known what it was to stand in darkness unfriended. We have known what it was to mourn in bitterness of spirit and in obduracy of will. We have known what it was to be cast down and broken, to be found of God, to have our wounds bound up, and to hear peaceable words of comfort. We have known what it was to find a Savior, and to rejoice in him. And since the day that thou didst make thyself known to us thou hast never departed from us. We often have hid ourselves from thee, but, wandering, have never gone beyond the sound of thy voice or the touch of thy reclaiming power. And thou hast, by thy grace, made our life one continuous memorial of goodness. Thou hast been with us in sickness, and thou hast been with us in dangers; thou hast been with us in bereavements and sorrows; thou hast been with us when troubles have pressed down, and our burdens have seemed more than we could bear. Thou hast put beneath us the arms of thine own strength. We have been carried through strange vicissitudes. Thou hast plowed our way, and turned it upside down, and filled it with confusion, but hast not forsaken us. In all our afflictions, thou too hast been afflicted! Thou hast gone with us into our temptation, and striven for us. We have been beset before and behind, and thou hast rescued

us. Yea, when we have been carried away captive, when by outspringing sin and temptation we have gone away from thee and from ourselves, thou hast not suffered us to be utterly cast away, and hast followed after to reclaim the wanderer and bring back the lost. O Lord Jesus, we thank thee that thou hast revealed thyself as the eternal Rescuer, and that thou hast given us a sense of thine own nature.

Now we turn with thanksgiving to thee. We rejoice over thy mercies. We praise thee for being what thou art. Shall any thing separate us from thee? What shall be a gift to us except that which thou givest? What is life except that which thou breathest? What are treasures except those which thou bestowest? What is joy, what is friendship, what is love, what is hope, or what is honor, disconnected from thee? We desire that thou shouldst enter into us, and sanctify all the avenues and all the springs of life, and make our hearts a temple for thine indwelling. We are weak, and blind, and stumbling, and the hand that lifted us up must sustain us. Thou that hast been the Author of our faith must be its Finisher. We cling to the promises of our God. Leave us not, nor forsake us. We know the disastrous end and issue if we are given up of thee. But thou wilt not forsake us. We are thine, and for thine own heart's sake thou wilt be faithful unto the end, for, loving thine own, thou dost love them unto the end.

And now, we beseech of thee, draw near to thy dear people, and, according to their several needs, bless them. Thou seest those that mourn; thou knowest the children of sorrow. Deliver those that are in perplexity. Give wisdom to those that lack it, light to those that are in darkness, and confirmation to those that are unstable. We beseech of thee, O Lord our God, that thou wilt revive thy work in the midst of thy people. Bring them nearer to God. Renew their covenant vows. May there be searchings of heart. May thy people cast out their evil doings, and return unto God, that he may return unto them. Awake in their hearts a growing desire for the salvation of men around about them. The time is short, and it is growing day by day less. Night comes, in which no man can work. O Lord God, arouse us all to greater diligence, to a more earnest enterprise for the kingdom of our God.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant a blessing to all those now gathered together who are not thine; who have chosen another way; who are without God, prayerless and hopeless; to whom is no heaven assured, and no promise

that is as a girdle about them. We pray that thou wilt arouse those that feel secure, and disclose to them their dangers. But, above all, reveal to them the wickedness of ingratitude and of an unloving disposition. And we pray that thou wilt bring them to thee, disclosing thyself to them, that they may see thy charms, and begin to love and serve the Savior. And may there be many added to this church of such as shall be saved.

Bless, we pray thee, all people. Let the light of the Gospel shine as the daylight. May all kingdoms see thy salvation. May all iniquity be purged out, and the glory of the Lord stand as an unsetting sun above this earth. We ask these things in the name of Jesus, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises forever. Amen.

XI.

The Storm and its Lessons.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sunday, December 4th, 1859.

The Storm and its Lessons.

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isa., lv., 10, 11.

The *figures* of the Bible are not mere graceful ornaments —arabesques to grace a border, or fairy frescoes, that give mere beauty to a chamber or saloon. They are language.

Human speech articulate is marvelous beyond all our thought, and a literature of words is more strange and important than a miracle. The occasional interjected facts in nature which we call miracles are not half so surprising or marvelous as the regular courses of cause and effect.

But human words are not sufficient even for human thoughts and feelings. All high and grand emotions scorn the tongue, that lies as helpless in the mouth as would be artillery to express the sound and grandeur of mountain thunders in tropical storms. All deep griefs, and, for the most part, tender and exquisite affections, are voiceless.

Then it is, if any speech is attempted, that nature yields another language, and figures, word-pictures and illustrations, if they do not express, at least vividly suggest truths far beyond the reach of words or the compass of sentences such as men frame for the common uses of life.

The Bible stands far beyond all other books in this use of the language of nature. The great globe is but an alphabet, and every object upon it is a letter; and, from beginning to

end of the Bible, these sublime letters are used to set forth in hieroglyphic the truths of immortality. And there is this nobility in the use of natural objects for moral teaching, that, to the end of time, and to all people, of how different soever language, the symbol used is the same. Artificial hieroglyphics differ with age and nation. The Oriental cities had their special characters — the Egyptian his — the Aztec his; and they differ one from another, so that one could not have read the written signs of the other. But the sun, the mountain, the ocean, the storm, the rain, the snow, the winds, lions and eagles, the sparrow and the dove, the lily and the rose, grass, earth, stones, and dirt, are the same in all ages, in all latitudes, to all people. And those truths that are expressed in the figures drawn from the natural world have relationships, and they are the most universal of any in the Bible, and the most frequent.

The passage before us is a teaching by picture. It gives prodigious stir to the imagination. As we read it we can not help feeling the truth opening, spreading, and shooting up stems and blossoms in every direction.

We shall not attempt to extract the truth in this case, and present it to you separated from its peculiar receptacle, as honey is served separated from the flower that produced it, but shall take up, in the same spirit and way, several of the truths included in this sublime teaching, for your consideration.

I. God works both by death and by life—by rain and by snow. Snow and rain seem so utterly unlike, that no sense would, at first experience, report them to be the same. Snow is conservative rain. It is good to keep, and it is good for little else until it stops being snow and comes to be rain. Except its beauty, it has only mechanical benefits. Before it can inspire life, it must change its nature.

How wonderful is the touch of nature! The air calls to the seas, and to the moist lands, and instantly invisible particles fly upward; and at length, touched by the authority of

cold, they obey its word, and marshal themselves in clouds, and range through the heavens! Clouds drop, and sweep their skirts along the mountains, or bank up the sun, and hide the stars from wishful eyes. Again, at a word, every drop changes, brilliant lines of frost shooting from its tiny centre until flakes of snow seem like the glorified forms of these rain-drops. No artist soul ever thought such variety; no artist finger ever was skilled to touch and produce such exquisite things as are the smallest snow-flakes.

There they hang, far up, in gray clouds, a suspended winter, a fleece unshorn. But when, ejected from their eyrie, they come down upon the earth, each little spickle mute and soft, waving like a feather, what can be thought of more harmless, less powerful than they! A child is mightier than any one of them. A little palm is stretched forth, and the flake dissolves upon it before it can be drawn back. A breath dissolves it. The lightest puff of wind changes its course, and whirls it whithersoever it will. The bird directs his own flight; the tiniest insect that whirls in gauzy maze along the evening sunset aims at something in its flight, and touches what it seeks for rest. But these wandering flakes of snow aim at nothing, seek nothing, but fall in unconscious weakness, it may be upon rock, or upon open-faced pools, or into the forge and chimney; or, caught by some side wind, they are whirled in a white obscurity, and made crazy with haste, and pitched into dark gorges, or lifted into eaves of houses, or let fall upon the boughs and quivering fingers of the pine, pluming again with white its green tufts, that sigh all summer, and mourn all winter.

Surely, of all things that are, snow is the most beautiful and the most feeble! Born of air-drops, less than the fallen dew, disorganized by a puff of warmth, driven everywhither by the least motion of the winds, each particle light and soft, and falling to the earth with such noiseless gentleness that the wings of ten million times ten million make no sound in the air, and the footfall of thrice as many makes no noise

upon the ground, what can be more helpless, powerless, harmless!

But not the thunder itself speaks God's power more than this very snow. It bears his omnipotence, soft and beautiful as it seems! While it is yet in the air, it is lord of the ocean and the prairies. Ships are blinded by it. It is a white darkness. All harbors are silent under this plushy embargo. The traveler hides. The prairies are given up to its behest; and woe to him that dares to venture against the omnipotence of soft-falling snow upon those trackless wastes! In one night it hides the engineering of a hundred years. It covers down roads, hides bridges, fills up valleys. It forbids the flocks to return to the fields. The plow can not find its furrows. Towns and villages yield up the earth, and obey this white diffusive despot!

Then, when it has given the earth a new surface, and changed all vehicles, it submits itself again to the uses of man, and becomes his servant, in its age, whom it ruled and defied in the hour of its birth. But, when flake is joined to flake, and the frosts within the soil join their forces to the frosts descended from the clouds, who shall unlock their clasped hands? Who shall disannul their agreement? or who shall dispossess them of their place? Gathered in the mountains, banked and piled till they touch the very clouds again in which once they were born and rocked, how terrible is their cold, and more terrible their stroke, when, slipping, some avalanche comes down the mountain side, the roar and the snow-stroke loud as thunder, and terrible as lightning! God gives to the silent snow a voice, and clothes its innocence and weakness with a power like his own.

But, behold again! That august might that buried the fields, that shut up husbandry and drove back from the field its herds, that wound the very wilderness with a burial-sheet, and from the tops of mountains sat watchful over all its work, defying men and storms even; which, when it was once enthroned, could not move nor change its mighty power—that

very might, when God pleases, shall go, as quick and as silent as it came. When God remembers the earth from the south, and his breath returns again, warm and life-giving, in an instant the snow goes back to its former state. Its flakes die to drops of dew, and the field drinks up the drifts and banks that hid its face; and the ice and snow, that sat silent on the hills, now sing down the brooks and rills, prophets of the coming flowers!

Behold! The buried earth is yet alive! It was not dead; it only slept. The great population of roots beneath the soil is yet there. The wheat is ready, the early-springing weeds are ready, the flowers are ready. At the voice of God, from the brown heath shall come living greenness, from the empty stick shall nod and wave tufts of leaves, and ten thousand flowers shall unfurl their banners, and begin the royal march of the year, to the music of a heaven full of birds and small singing insects! Nothing has been lost—nothing has been harmed.

Nothing lost? Then where are the leaves of last summer? Where are the roses of last June, the grass of August, the rushes and reeds, the orchards and their fruit, the golden-rod of September, and the asters and chrysanthemums of October? They have changed, not perished. They have fallen down to the earth, and lie at the root, and yield themselves to the uses of the new summer, and new life is springing from the old. The old nurses the new. Life is feeding at the breast of death. Dying is but a new start for life.

So the very death of the year is not harmful. God watches the snow, and all that is beneath it. The very winter is his stern messenger of good—a rugged benefactor, every one of whose strokes are kind, whose very chains are the prophecies of unloosing, and whose destructions are but preparations for resurrection.

Under all our winters lie flowers. Yea, beneath death itself, heaven is waiting; and immortality sings but just beyond the sigh of desolation and the touch of weakness.

But we must not spend our time in this only view, though much more might be reaped in this harvest-field of snow.

II. This whole representation strikes, in the very centre, a feeling, almost universal, of unfaith in moral power in comparison with physical power. It was this that called forth some of the sublimest teachings of the Old Testament. Men have become used to judge by their senses, and to estimate causes by physical tests.

We are obliged to transfer language and illustration from the physical to the moral realm. But the laws of the two are so very diverse that no error is more sure to follow false reasoning than that which follows the application of the rules of judgment in the one realm to the other. It was because of this that Christ said, "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation"—that is, it does not address itself to the senses, the eye, the ear, the hand. The kingdom of heaven is a silent and hidden thing, like leaven hidden in three measures of meal. The kingdom of heaven begins a great way off from its end, dawning like the faintest star, and shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

And so is the reverse true; namely, that the existence and prevalence of powers apparently adverse to moral progress is no token of decadence of good, and no cause of fear.

If we had had no experience, I can not imagine any thing more shocking than a summer storm. It is because we have outlived so many that we do not fear them. We have seen both ends, and measure now the terrible brow of the coming storm by our memory of its retreating glory. But what if one who had never known any such experience could be placed in summer so as to witness the coming, the power, and the end of a thunder-shower!

The whole heaven is calm and blue. The tallest stemmed flowers stand quiet in the windless air, except when a bee rocks them — not the topmost leaf stirs. Children are all afrolic. Beasts roam at leisure through the pastures. The brooks gurgle, and flash the color of their pebbles through

their changing waters. Birds sing, or sit in cozy corners to plume their feathers. Still the furrow follows the plow, and the shout of the driver to his oxen comes back from the hillside in soft mockery.

But suddenly, straight out of the west come clouds, that gather without call of trumpet, and make haste, and spread, rushing silent, but swifter than the swiftest steed. The sun is gone out. Strange colors, awfully contrasted, sully the blue. Puffs of wind whirl dust along the road. Men drop their work, unyoke the uneasy oxen, and run for the nearest shelter. Crows and gulls are making their way through the air. Children run home. The traveler lays on the whip, with eye askance at the coming clouds. The cliffs of darkness are mounting higher. Already the distant haze shuts out the horizon and the remote fields from sight. Uncertain winds, like *aid-de-camps* on the eve of battle, rush with might, or suddenly lull and stand utterly still. A few drops come down.

All at once the heaven crashes with outspeaking thunders. The skies have suddenly fallen down. Trees writhe, and bend, and groan. Chimneys sound hoarse diapason. The foundations are broken up. The roar of rain, and the wrench and rock of winds, the settled gloom of cloud and water, embroidered with lines of lightning, and the mingling of all things above and beneath in a wild fury of commotion—tell me! would it be strange if an unaccustomed man, seeing this without previous experience, should deem the end of the world itself to have come?

But, what has happened? After a due course, the rain grows lighter; the winds now drive away what first they drove on; they dash upon the gray wreaths grown thin by raining. The blue was never so blue, never so pale, never so all-hued; but, gray-blue or indigo-blue, it was never so pure to our thinking. The fields come to sight again. Yonder is an oak that the lightning struck and split. A few twisted branches lie by the trees. Besides this, nothing has suffered

harm. The furrow has not yet swallowed its water. The roads and fields have a thousand mirrors, in which grass and flowers may arrange their disheveled tresses. Birds were never so unwet, and chant down the storm that silently moves away in the distance, with God's banner of victory lifted up in rainbow upon it. And men, regaining their liberty, laugh and gratulate each other at the blessings of the storm. Nothing is hurt; every thing is safe, every thing is fed, and every thing rejoices.

III. But one other point I will make before passing to some applications, still following out this figure.

Can any man imagine a greater difference between cause and effect than that to which we are accustomed in the survey of nature? Who can imagine a greater difference than exists between the rain-drop when it falls and the rain-drop when it reappears speedily in vegetable growths—in the grass, the flower, the stalwart tree? It comes from the cloud, and rests upon the earth; but speedily it is caught up, and set to work in the strange enginery of nature. It finds its way into life, and in that life it makes acquaintance, through the leaves, with the sun. How different is it from the rain-drop that fell in the late shower, when it shakes itself in the leaf, rustles in the grass, or forms a part of those luscious juices of the fruit that tempt the eye and the palate! It fell rain; it comes forth a leaf. It fell a liquid, transparent drop; it rises in varied forms of beauty and use. Who, looking upon the leaves of to-day, would dream that they are those drops that fell last week in that gray storm? And yet they are. You can not tell by the way a cause strikes the earth what is the form of the effect it shall produce when it enters the laboratory where God is the chemist and the worker.

Having sufficiently followed out, in the spirit of the figure itself, these images in nature, let me now pass, in closing, to speak of one or two points of application, which I shall treat purely in their moral forms.

1. The power of goodness, even in its least forms, in this world is never lost. And it was with reference to this very thing that this whole passage was spoken:

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

It is the continuity, the certain preservation, and the final efficiency of every moral influence for good that issues from the heart of God that is here taught, and guarded against skepticism. We, divinely instructed, borrow these same influences from God, who broods over us. And as there shall not be one single influence for good let forth from the mind of God that shall dare to report itself an empty-handed servant—as every such influence shall do the errand whereto it is sent, so likewise every single influence for good that we borrow from God, in the lowest as well as the highest spheres, shall not return unto us void. Like the rain, it may be hidden; like the snow, it may dissolve out of our sight, but it shall not fail to accomplish its legitimate result.

There has not been one single genuine cause of good; there has not been one single good enthusiasm that has set on fire some heart; there has not been one single breath of love that has touched the higher feelings of some soul; there has not been one single volition or power that has been followed by

appropriate action, in all the periods of time, that has failed to do its appointed work. Seeds perish by the thousand; ten thousand things in the vegetable world seem to be cut short in the initial stage of their growth; but there has not been one influence for good, for purity, for justice, for mercy, for integrity, for spirituality in the world that has come to nothing. Such influences have in every case accomplished the thing whereto they were sent, and prospered in their errand, though we may not have been able to trace them to their final issues. However much good you may do, you may be sure that none of it will be done in vain, although the effects which it produces may be hidden from your view. You are not to know by the registering of the eye, or the measuring of the senses, all the results of the good you accomplish.

Some men seem to themselves to be useful only when they can measure the effects of their conduct; but these things have been hidden from the eye of men. Heroic men, who lived before the days of Christ—noble old prophet souls—longed to behold the sight of coming glory to hasten which their deeds had contributed, but they died without that sight. They could not trace those deeds to their consequences. But all the stripes and persecutions that men have borne for the sake of goodness; all the sympathy that they have treasured up in their hearts for their fellow-men; all the blood that they have poured out for the cause of truth and righteousness—all this has been garnered and placed to their account, not in the books of men—God has taken care of it; and he stands saying, for the encouragement of his fainting children, "As the rain and the snow which come down about you to-day shall not return without accomplishing that whereto it is sent, so not the slightest thing put forth for goodness, and usefulness, and purity shall perish. Though it disappear, though it be hidden, it is that it may do its office-work."

Do not work when you are in the sunshine alone. Do not count only those things useful the effects of which you can

see. The results of usefulness are often covered up. It is well that it is so, for man's pride and vanity easily get drunk on the wine of success. From those, therefore, that do the most is hidden much that they do. It is not best that they should know it all. But God knows it; and there comes a registering day, a reaping day, an exhibition day, a day of welcoming and gratulation, when good men go home to heaven to be surprised with the harvest of which they only sowed the seed—the much that has come from the little.

A farmer goes to market to purchase grain. He puts the bags containing it into his wagon, and drives slowly home. As the wagon jolts over the stony road, one of the bags becomes untied, and the grain is scattered along the way. The birds catch some, fly off with it, and drop it in distant places. Some is blown in different directions by the winds. Thus the farmer goes on for leagues without knowing what he is doing. But the next summer finds the scattered seed; it starts, and grows, and when he sees his own grain he does not know it. He did not even know that he lost it. And so with good deeds. Men often perform them unconsciously, and they bear fruit; and when they see that fruit they do not know that it is the result of any thing they have done.

2. The advance of this world in goodness is not to be judged by the outward sight. It is not to be judged by the opinions of men—not by the opinions of even good men. We can not tell the power of moral influences by any external signs. One thing we know, and that is, that there is nothing so powerful in nature as there is in the moral influences which God exerts on the world. Napoleon used to say that the moral influence of his army was worth forty thousand soldiers. The invisible moral influence which he carried with him then was another vast army! And men are finding out in these later days that there is no other power so strong as influence—and by influence we mean the power received by one mind from other minds, in distinction from physical power. You are not to form your estimate of the power of civilization in the world

from what you see of civilizing processes, nor of the power of love from the exponents which you see of this power. You can not see what has been the power of Christianity in the world for the last eighteen hundred years. Men speak of the long delay of the fruits of Christianity. They say, "It began more than eighteen hundred years ago, and yet the things that it was promised should be wrought by it have not yet been wrought." But who can tell how much has been wrought by it? You might as well undertake to tell how many seeds have grown since the flood, as to tell what has been wrought by Christianity in the world! What data have you from which to reckon respecting such things? The subtle, hidden, recondite, unknown, mysterious influences that are working in the nursery, in the school, in all forms of business, in the mechanic arts, in commerce, in politics, in literature, in the ten thousand departments and organizations of society—who can estimate them? The root or the stem we can see, but it is only by-and-by that we shall see the blossom; and those who live in the harvest periods of the world will say, "How fast the world grew when men thought it stood still."

3. The seeming disasters which come upon the cause of religion, and upon the various virtues which it is sending forth among men, need not give us any concern. You can kill a seed, and that which has sprouted from it, in the vegetable kingdom; but not so in the moral kingdom. When a seed is dropped from the hand of God you can not kill the seed, and you can not kill that which has sprouted from it; neither can you crowd that which has sprouted back into the seed. You may be sure that when any moral influence for good has begun to grow, it will continue to grow. It may be hidden in one age, but it will be revealed in another. It may be eclipsed in one hemisphere, but it will shine forth in another. It may change in its manner of working, but it will never go backward. The world has never lost any of its influences for good. It has been steadily adding to those influences. Winter

broods and preserves under its protecting snow the very roots whose leaves it slew, and gives them a new lease of summer. Reactions and reverses are but leaf-stripping, not root-killing powers!

In 1848 all Europe stood on tiptoe to see liberty, which they thought was very near. Then a reaction came on, and all Europe mourned because tyranny had reasserted its strength. But tyranny had gained nothing, and liberty had lost nothing. Liberty, like leaven, has been working there all the time, in channels where men have failed to discern it, so that there is more liberty in Europe now than there was in 1848. Italy could not have maintained such liberty in 1848 as she has in 1859; and what she is achieving by moral power she is prepared to sustain with physical courage. There was never before so much liberty in the world as there is to-day.

It is said that such terrible disasters as that which has just taken place in a sister state put back the cause of emancipation.* Put back the cause of emancipation! You might as well talk of reversing the decrees of God! It was said that the insurrection of 1830 put back the liberty of the slave; yet ever since that time a spirit of liberty has been at work among us, which was unknown even in revolutionary periods, and it has accomplished for human rights that which it would ordinarily have taken hundreds of years to accomplish.

A man takes a seed, and says, "You want to grow; you shall not; I will put you where you can not;" and he stamps it into the ground. It is gone! There is not a thing to be seen of it! But the rains will find it, and the sun will come and whisper hope to it, and the root will not ask permission to grow the downward way, and the stalk will take permission to grow the upward way, and that which was supposed

* In October, 1859, Harper's Ferry, Virginia, was invaded by a band of twenty-two men, under the lead of John Brown, for the purpose of instigating a general slave insurrection. The attempt failed. John Brown was captured, tried on a charge of treason and murder, and executed on the 2d of December, 1859, two days before the preaching of this sermon.

to be stamped into its grave shall find itself alive, and shall multiply a hundred-fold.

Now all the efforts that are being made to put back the cause of liberty will prove to be but so many means for hastening the day of its consummation. I like the tyrant's flail. I like to see him plow. I like to see him make himself asinine for breaking up the ground. I like to see him do a yeoman's duty in the field. He is sowing the seed for the harvest of liberty. For God, and not man, reigns in the earth. Men think they are directing their own course, but God is steering them into his own harbors.

God presides over all things and over all men. He shapes our courses. He loves the world, and bears it in his arms as a mother carries her child in her bosom. He watches over it. He smiles at the fantasies of tyranny, and mocks the airs of oppressors. He knows in his heart that the day is coming when every man shall sit under his own vine and fig-tree, and none shall make him afraid.

There is to me promise in the rain-drops of to-day, now that I have learned to read them. I hear the voice of God saying to my heart, "As the rain cometh down from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Even so: thy word is for religion, for love, for liberty, for justice; and thy word shall abide forever!

XII.

Faithfulness in Little Things.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath, December 22d, 1861.

Faithfulness in Little Things.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."—Luke, xvi., 10.

The teaching of our Lord may be characterized as instinct with a direct formative power upon the disposition and character. The instruments he employed were the great moral truths of nature and of grace. He spent no time in teaching us the relations of one truth to another, and the coherence of the whole into a system. This was a point in which he differed from, and contrasted with, philosophic teachers. He mainly taught the relation of grand moral truths to our moral sense, to our feelings, and to our conduct. The record of Christ's teachings is peculiarly full of ethical matter. It is rich beyond all other teaching in sentiment, in spiritual truth, in food for the highest reflection, and for the profoundest mystical experience. But its front, its most noticeable aspect, is that of a scheme of education, designed immediately as well as remotely to act upon men's lives and upon their characters, to fashion them for immortality and glory.

As we might suppose, the very root of moral character is represented in Christ's teachings to be Truth. The term *righteousness* covers the whole product of the faculty of conscience. It is justice, truth, equity, fairness, uprightness, integrity, purity, frankness, sincerity, and whatever other word we employ to signify truth in its ramifications, and in its application to human disposition and life. Even love, that is the highest attainment of the human soul, can not be developed independently of conscience. Truth is the golden san-

dal in which love must walk. Without the sandals of truth, love is like a fair virgin wandering in a wilderness full of thorns and nettles, with naked feet, which soon are torn and poisoned so that she can not move. There is not one of the moral sentiments that can unfold from any other basis than that of conscience, or, in its large sense, truth. Truth and justice, therefore, are the soil out of which all moral faculties may be said to grow. It is, consequently, either commanded, exhorted, or, yet more emphatically, implied, in every part of the Lord's teachings.

In our text the Master declares that fidelity, which is an element of conscience, must be thorough. It must not be an optional thing, chosen when we see that it will be better than any other instrument to secure a desired end. It must belong to every part of life, pervading it. It must belong to the least things as much as to the highest. It is not a declaration that little things are as important as great things. It is not a declaration that the conscience is to regard all duties as of one magnitude and of one importance. It is a declaration that the habit of violating conscience, even in the least things, produces mischiefs that at last invalidate it for the greatest, and that is a truth that scarcely can have contradiction.

Every man is bound to love the truth; not simply the great truths of religion, of political society, of philosophy in its wide ranges—but every man is bound to love the truth of things in personal affairs; in minute matters; in daily thoughts; in feelings; in taste; in trifles as well as in things of magnitude; in matters of praise or blame; in raillery and wit; in that immense microscopic realm of human life down below human law, and even below the reach of public sentiment, where men are themselves the sole spectators of themselves; yea, lower than that, in that unconscious region where unperceived influences well up, and automatic impulses and spontaneous thoughts fly out from the soul, as sparks snap from the burning brand, and yet carry with

them, in their minute atomic form, the whole nature of that brand from which they shot. Down in that very realm of germs and beginnings of thought, God requires truth. He requires *truth in the inward parts.*

Our Lord declares that infidelity to the conscience in small things is intimately connected with a like dereliction in larger ones. Little lies are seeds of great ones. Little cruelties are germs of great ones. Little treacheries are, like small holes in raiment, the beginnings of large ones. Little dishonesties are like the drops that work through the banks of the levee; a drop is an engineer: it tunnels a way for its fellows, and they, rushing, prepare for all behind them. A worm in a ship's plank proves, in time, worse than a cannon ball.

The whole truth comes to this: human life can not be sound without the presence of a sober and robust conscience in all its parts. A series of minute derelictions, long-continued, though of comparatively little consequence in the result of each upon the apparent life, are of incalculable influence upon the interior life, in their sum and final result. They deteriorate conscience itself. They injure its tone and sensibility. Human conduct works in two ways. As the cannon that sends the missile far across the field to damage the enemy also springs back, and by recoil violently strains the gun-carriage, and even injures those that stand heedlessly near, so to our actions there is not only a spring outward, but a rebound back. A great many men attempt to judge whether a thing is right or wrong simply by what they see that it does. Now the least part of a man's action is that which he can see in its immediate consequences. There be many courses of conduct in which the results before a man's face are indifferent, or perhaps partially good, but in which the reactive influence, the recoil upon the man's own constitution and nature, is morally fatal. And in estimating what is right and what is wrong, and how right and how wrong, we are to take into account this double action—the effect which a man's thoughts, and feelings, and judgments, and conditions have

upon his own moral nature, as well as upon his fellows and upon the state of society. The little transgressions in which men indulge, though they have no power upon the settled course of human affairs, even if they are swept out into a current of public sentiment that carries them down, as leaves are carried by the Amazon, are not harmless nor indifferent, because, aside from the influence of minor delinquencies upon the sum of affairs outwardly, there is another history and record, namely, their influence upon the actor. I repeat that they deteriorate conscience. You can by a blow crush and destroy the conscience, or you can nibble and gnaw it to pieces. There is one way in which a lion strikes down his prey, and there is another way in which a rat comes at its prey; and in time the gnawing of vermin is as fatal to beauty and life itself as the stroke of the lion's paw. These little infidelities to duty, truth, rectitude, lower the moral tone, limit its range, destroy its sensibility. In short, they put out its light. It is recorded of a light-house erected on a tropical shore that it was like to have failed for the most unlooked-for reason. When first kindled, the brilliant light drew about it such clouds of insects which populate the evening and night of equatorial lands that they covered and fairly darkened the glass. There was a noble light that shone out into the darkness and vanquished night, that all the winds could not disturb, nor all the clouds and storms hide; but the soft wings and gauzy bodies of myriads of insects, each one of which was insignificant, effectually veiled the light, and came near defeating the proposed gift to mariners. And so it is in respect to the conscience. There may be a power in it to resist great assault, to overcome strong temptations, and to avoid fearful dangers, but there may be a million little venomous insect habits, unimportant in themselves taken individually, but fearful in their results collectively.

I propose to illustrate this truth in some of its relations to life.

In the first place, I shall speak of the heedlessness and un-

conscientiousness with which men take up opinions and form judgments, on every side and of every kind, in daily life. In regard to events, men seldom make it a matter of conscience to see things as they are, and hear things as they really report themselves. They follow their curiosity, their sense of wonder, their temper, their interests, or their prejudices, instead of their judgment and their conscience. There are few men who make it a point to know just what things do happen of which they are called to speak, and just how they happen. How many men were there around the corner? "Twenty," says the man, quickly. There were seven. How long did you have to wait? "Two hours, at least." It was just three quarters of an hour by the watch. So, in a thousand things that happen every day, one man repeats what his imagination reported to him, and another man what his impatient, irritable feelings said to him. There are very few men that make it a matter of deliberate conscience to see things as they are, and report them as they happen.

The impressions that pass through men's minds of current events, if they were taken out, measured, and analyzed, would be found not simply partial and crude—for partialness and crudity belong to our uneducated and undeveloped state—but without much proper moral effort to secure correctness.

Did you ever look at a *camera obscura* without the double glass by which objects are reversed? If you take simply the glass of the camera, every thing is reflected upside down, and inside of your room you shall see men going like flies on the ceiling, with their feet up and their heads down, and trees hanging with their roots up and their tops down. And if you were to turn men's minds inside out, you would find that their impressions of the events of life and current things are all in a jumble, and you would see trees upside down, and men walking unnaturally.

This becomes a great hinderance to business, clogs it, keeps men under the necessity of revising their false impressions; expends time and work; puts men on false tracks and

in wrong directions; multiplies the burdens of life. As men that walk in northern climates find that their own breath, rising in a cloud before their eyes, and freezing on their eyelashes and upon their beard, hinders their vision, so the thoughts, and feelings, and prejudices that rise up before the minds of men blind their judgments of the common things of life. More than half of the burdensomeness of men's daily lives consists in this—that they are obliged to clean out and trundle away their misconceptions, and false imaginations, and wrong measurements, and hasty judgments, and unconscientious experiences. We are all like Penelope, except in purpose. We knit one day, and the next unravel what we have knit. Our life consists of zigzags instead of perpetual onward movements, and for this reason we have a very imperfect moral sense. We are forever ciphering the sum over again. Most men, I think, in respect to questions in life, are as I am in counting money. I count only for confusion. The first time going over, the amount is a hundred dollars; and, to make it sure, I count again, when it is a hundred and ten; and, as there must be an error somewhere, I count again, and it is ninety-five; and the longer I count, the more utterly uncertain I am what the sum is. So it is with men in reference to their moral judgments of affairs. They go over, and over, and over them, because there is a fundamental want of moral accuracy, arising from a want of training and right habit in that regard.

But its worse effect is seen in the judgments and prejudices which men are liable to entertain about their fellow-men, and the false sentences which they are accustomed to issue, either by word of mouth or by thoughts and feelings. In thousands of men, the mind, if unveiled, would be found to be a star-chamber filled with false witnesses and cruel judgments. If you were to go back into the old star-chamber of England, and read the records made of testimony given and sentences passed by men of partial information, what a literature of hell would those records be! But worse than these are the cruel,

rash, hateful judgments which men form of each other in the silence of the mind, simply because they follow their interests, their feeelings, their prejudices, and not their conscience, in ascertaining facts and coming to conclusions. Therefore it is that the Word of God says, "Judge righteous judgment;" that is, according to conscience and equity, and not according to passion or carelessness.

Few men would dare, if they were sworn upon a jury, to give a heedless or a false verdict. Still fewer, if they sat as judge, to determine law and promote justice, would consent to employ their high position for the subversion of law and justice. But every man is juror and judge both, sworn by God's law to just judgments about his fellow-men. Human actions are passing before the mind, and if conscience is in the judgment-seat, men are apt to form right judgments of character and conduct; but if pride, or arrogance, or selfishness, or heedlessness, or any of the rebel crew are sitting in that seat, then men are accustomed to form about their fellow-men such judgments as, if made in court, would outrage every principle of justice. It only needs that a judge should once deliberately pervert justice to blast his reputation. But there is not a single day in which you do not, in your silent thoughts, if not in words, asperse the character, and motives, and conduct of your fellow-men. Although you may not do men harm by publishing your thoughts, you injure yourself by entertaining them. It does any man harm to have wrong judgments proceed from a biased moral sense.

The effect in each case may be small, but if you consider the sum totals of a man's life, and the grand amount of the endless scenes of false impressions, of wicked judgments, of causeless prejudices, they will be found to be enormous.

This, however, is the least evil. It is the entire untrustworthiness of a moral sense which has been so dealt with that is most to be deplored. The conscience ought to be like a perfect mirror. It ought to reflect exactly the image that falls upon it. A man's judgment that is kept clear by com-

merce with conscience ought to reveal things as they are, facts as they exist, and conduct as it occurs.

Now it is not necessary to break a mirror to pieces in order to make it worthless. Let one go behind it with a pencil, or with a needle of the finest point, and, with delicate touch, make the smallest line through the silver coating of the back; the next day let him make another line at right angles to that; and the third day let him make still another line parallel to the first one; and the next day let him make another line parallel to the second, and so continue to do day by day, and one year shall not have passed away before that mirror will be so scratched that it will be good for nothing. It is not necessary to deal it a hard blow to destroy its power; these delicate touches will do it, little by little.

It is not necessary to be a murderer or a burglar in order to destroy the moral sense; but ah! these million little infelicities, as they are called, these scratchings and raspings, take the silver off from the back of the conscience—take the tone and temper out of the moral sense.

Nay, we do not need even such mechanical force as this; just let the apartment be uncleansed in which the mirror stands; let particles of dust, and the little flocculent parts of smoke, settle, film by film, flake by flake, speck by speck, upon the surface of the mirror, and its function is destroyed, so that it will reflect neither the image of yourself nor of any thing else. Its function is as much destroyed as if it were dashed to pieces.

Not even is this needed; only let one come so near to it that his warm breath falling on its cold face is condensed to vapor, and then it can make no report.

Now there are comparatively few men who destroy their moral sense by a dash and a blow, but there is many a man whose conscience is seared as with a hot iron. There are but few men of whom it can not be said that the warm breath of passion covers their moral sense with vapor; that the dust and smoke of neglect settle on it and hide its face; or that the

gentle touches of their own thoughts, and feelings, and actions destroy its reflecting power. It is these little things, working day by day, for weeks, and months, and years, that destroy the purity, and so the trustworthiness, of conscience.

And so it has come to pass that men are so unreliable and untrustworthy that, in fact, we do not trust their reports. Children do. We trust a few men whom we have proved and know. But it is a sad fact that as we grow older we do not trust men in general, but are on our guard, and cautious whom we trust. There is something charming in that innocence of children which leads them to run to every one that smiles, and something sad in that reserved, cautioning look with which the mother draws the child back, as much as to say, "My darling, you know nothing about him." The child is right. It follows the impulse of its better nature. Its conduct is an index of what this life should be, and what the heavenly life will be. But the mother's caution is not unwise, because she has learned that the consciences of men have little to do with their character and conduct, and that men are not to be trusted until more known than we ordinarily know them.

How is it with yourselves? How many men do you trust? How many men do you know that you would trust? Could you not count them on your hand, and then have at least four fingers to use for something else? I do not mean that if they were to be waked up, and put upon their honor, and fortified, and hedged about, they could not be in some measure trusted; but, taking affairs as they are, do you not think it necessary to look on each side of a man, and ask, "What is his interest? where did he come from? what does he represent?" before you will trust him? Is not that the process in life of men among men? Not bad men among bad men merely—is it not the spontaneous action of men? Do you not find that instinctively you deal with one man differently from another? And does not the difference turn on this—that one man goes by obstinacy in a certain direction; that

imagination in another leads him to exaggerate; and that yet another is cautious, reserved, and suspicious? Are you not persuaded that all men have to be taken according to their dispositions? Do you not know that before you take a man's testimony there is an instantaneous sifting, like the questioning by lawyers of witnesses on the stand, who are like shuttlecocks between battledores, thrown back and forth, both ways, in order that you may know whether to trust him or not, and whether what he says is true or false?

Look at the way in which men of the world treat other men of the world. Look at the degree of trustworthiness which has impressed itself upon your mind as belonging to men, and which comes out in your involuntary daily business. Are those men only to be characterized as equitable that have truth in the inward parts; that form righteous judgments; that are faithful in little things in order that they may be faithful in large? Do you find such men? Blessed be God, I do; just enough to make it sure that such men can exist in this world; just enough to make me feel that I shall not give up humanity; just enough to make me sure that there are ideals and models to which I can point the young. And yet the prevailing experience is one that humbles us, and saddens the heart, as an evidence of our moral deterioration.

We must know the man, and make allowance for his peculiarities. We have to bring together concurrent testimonies, and make an average, and so arrive at conclusions respecting probabilities. The judgment and conscience are rarely, if ever, presumed to give a true report. We have to go into a calculation to find out what is true.

This is revealed in all our courts. Men's senses are known to lie, not merely on purpose, but through heedlessness. It is a very common thing for men not to see what they look at, and not to hear what sounds in their ears. It is supposed that a man's eyesight is the most reliable testimony. You will often hear a man say, "Do you not believe me? I saw it myself." That is the very reason why I do not believe

most men, because there is nothing with reference to which men are so often mistaken as the things that they look at; for, having eyes, they see not.

I staid last Friday night at the Continental Hotel in Philadelphia, where they have a sliding chamber that runs up from a lower floor to the fifth story, following an immense column of iron, cut like a screw, which is stationary, in the centre. If you stand below the chamber, no person can persuade you that that column does not rise and fall, such is the effect produced on the eye by the spiral motion. You can not make yourself feel that that column is not ascending and descending, carrying with it a fixed chamber. Your eye lies. The column turns round, but it does not ascend or descend a particle. Now get into the chamber. There is an iron column extending from top to bottom of the building. In that chamber you are carried up and down, and the column stands still; and yet I defy you to make it seem as though any thing moved but the column. If you went by your sense of seeing, you would declare that the chamber did not move. Under such circumstances, one would be apt to say, "The chamber is stationary, and the column moves, or there is no truth in eyesight." That is it—there is no absolute or infallible truth in eyesight. The column is the only thing that is stationary. Men say, "I saw it," as though that settled the controversy. Ah! if you saw it, then I do not believe you. And our courts have pronounced an implied judgment upon the fallibleness of men's senses. It is not till you have put one eyesight with another, and one ear with another, and made a sort of equation of errors, that you can come to any thing like a certainty of judgment.

The effect of this is not merely to teach us the moral lesson that man is fallible: it is to diminish the trust of man in man. And what is the effect of diminishing that? It is to introduce an element which dissevers society, which drives men away from one another, and takes away our strength. Faith in man, trust in man, is the great law of cohesion in

human society. Any thing that makes men distrust or waver in their confidence, any thing that wakes up their suspicions, really tends to disintegrate and separate them. By as much as you lack faith, you lose unity, and with it power and helpfulness, and lay the foundation for mischiefs.

And so this infidelity in little things and little duties works both inwardly as well as outwardly. It deteriorates the moral sense; it makes men unreliable; it makes man stand in doubt of man; it loosens the ties that bind society together, and make it strong; it is the very counteracting agent of that divine love which was meant to bring men together in power.

The same truth, yet more apparently, and with more melancholy results, is seen in the untrustworthiness and infidelity of men in matters of honesty and dishonesty. The man that steals one penny is—just as great a transgressor as if he stole a thousand dollars? No, not that. The man that steals one single penny is—as great a transgressor against the laws of society as if he stole a thousand dollars? No, not exactly that. The man that steals one penny is—just as great a transgressor against the commercial interests of men as if he stole a thousand dollars? No, not that. The man that steals a penny is just as great a transgressor against *the purity of his own conscience* as if he stole a million of dollars. When a man makes up his mind that he will be a thorough-paced villain, and steal like a cashier, he does not do himself any more damage in his moral sense than when he says, "I will filch a penny." To steal large sums damages the firm, damages the bank, damages the commercial interests of the community; but, so far as moral deterioration is concerned, the moment a man says, "I will do wrong," the damage is done; the glass is broken; the mirror is defaced; the conscience is soiled. He can not do more if he says, "I will do a double wrong, or a triple wrong." And there is the great mischief of it. There is an impression that the culpability of things bears some proportion to their magnitude. To steal an apple is not much.

In stealing it you do not get much; but you get all the damage that you would if it was a golden apple. To betray a small trust has the same moral effect as to betray a large one.

Do you stand at a bank counter, and present a check for a thousand dollars? and does the man behind the counter, in his haste, hand you eleven hundred dollars? and do you walk away saying, "It is his business to take care of his own affairs: I will take care of mine?" You are a thief! The law of honesty is that no man shall take a thing without rendering an equivalent, and that law you have violated. If that man blunders in finance, it is no reason why you should steal. And yet how many men are there, that, if they were to take a thousand, a hundred, or ten, or five dollars too much, would think of returning it? You say that corporations have no souls. *You* will not have any that is worth any thing long if you pursue such a course.

How many men are there that, when looking over the money that they have received during the day, and, seeing a bill that appears like a counterfeit bill, do not like to look at it again, and thrust it into the drawer? You have taken a circuitous way to make yourself a scoundrel. You saw it sufficiently to produce the conviction on your mind that it was counterfeit; and the moral effect of passing it is the same as though you knew it to be counterfeit. Or do you take it up and say, "Well, somebody has passed it on me, and I have a right to shove it along?" Why, you are a counterfeiter! I tell you, my friend, it only requires the opportunity to lead you to forge bills and put them on other men! Do you protest and say, "Do you expect that I am going to lose that money?" It is a choice between losing the money and losing your conscience. I do not know what a person would not do who is willing to throw his manhood away for the sake of a little money. And if you are going to sell yourself, do not sell yourself for a dollar bill, or a five-dollar bill — though I think such a man would get enough for himself even at such a price.

I do not know of any buyer that pays such high prices as the devil pays when he buys men. Here is a man that sells himself for about one eighth of a pound of chicory in a pound of coffee. He sells himself to every customer that comes in. He *adulterates*. He prepares his commodity with a lie, and retails it with another lie. Every time a man commits a known dishonesty, he sells his soul; and thousands of men are selling themselves by little driblets. A man who sells himself thus—cheats himself? No, he cheats the devil. The devil pays too much for him!

How many men are there who, if, through carelessness, the conductor neglected to punch their railroad ticket, and they found it in their pocket the next day, would not take it out, and look at it, and say, "I think I will use that again?" You paid for that ticket a dollar? Yes. You have had service to the amount of a dollar? Yes. If, then, you ride with that ticket again, you steal one dollar from the railroad company as much as if you went to the till and took a dollar. And yet, how many men would not ride twice with a ticket under such circumstances—yes, forty times?

I am informed that before the commutation system was abandoned by the ferry company, men of property and good standing in society would boldly declare that they had a commutation ticket in their pocket when they had none, for the sake of going through without paying! They did this when the ferriage was but one penny. They lied for one cent!

I pity the devil. I do not know what he does with such men. It is awful to be chief magistrate of a parcel of men like these. I can not understand how these exiguous, thrice-squeezed men can be managed.

I have given you but one or two instances of this kind; but if you comb society you will find it to be full of just such little meannesses—things that men do with the cock of the eye, or with dexterity of finger; misunderstandings; overreachings; underplottings; all sorts of trickery—which pivot on essential dishonesty.

And these rebound. They destroy the moral sense. If you go to-night to a bank, and break through the door, and rob the safe, or work above it, and split the granite over it, you are not more dishonest than you would be if you only ran away with a sixpence that did not belong to you.

The danger of these little things is veiled under a false impression. You will hear a man say of his boy, "Though he may tell a little lie, he would not tell a big one; though he may practice a little deceit, he would not practice a big one; though he may commit a little dishonesty, he would not commit a big one." But these little things are the ones that destroy the honor, and the moral sense, and throw down the fence, and let a whole herd of buffaloes of temptation drive right through you. Criminals that die on the gallows; miserable creatures that end their days in poor-houses; wretched beings that hide themselves in loathsome places in cities; men that are driven as exiles across the sea and over the world—these are the ends of little things, the beginnings of which were thought to be safe. It is these little things that constitute your peculiar temptation and your worst danger.

Take heed, parents—you that are training your children—take heed what God says to you; ye that are young, take heed what God says; and let us all take heed. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

XIII.

The Blind restored to Sight.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath evening, December 22d, 1861.

The Blind restored to Sight.

"And they came to Jericho; and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side, begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace; but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort; rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way."—Mark, x., 46–52.

The place was near Jericho, a city about eighteen miles north of Jerusalem, and seven west of the Jordan. The scene was one of wondrous interest.

Emerging from Jericho came the more nimble and excitable part of the people, for the narrative shows that there were some who came up to the blind man in advance of the Savior. Then following were women leading their little children, and old men making their way as best they could. There was a mixed multitude, doubtless, surging around the Savior, and in turn coming up, or dropping back to let others come; while he came, patient, collected, clear-faced, large-eyed—eyes that looked full upon you; not piercing, or searching, as if seeking to know, but with a comprehending gaze, as if he included, and understood fully, every one that he looked upon, and needed not that any should tell him what was in man; talking to those about him, never with outward excite-

ment, but with that deep inward feeling which causes one's words to rebound from your heart, fluttering it with strange excitement and mysterious feelings.

By turns he listened to questions, and replied; or he heard, with a gentle attentiveness, the interchange of words in the crowd, one with another, answering matters only when referred to him. Now and then some event would be seized, or some object pointed out, by which he would illustrate a truth so vividly that no man ever saw the fig-tree, the stone, the flower, the sparrow, the city or building again, without recalling the truth for which it had served as a text. When the noon grew torrid the crowd would scatter and shelter themselves. At evening, gathering again, they would move on. In this, to us, strange way, our Savior accomplished the greater part of his teaching. He *went about* doing good. And along the path of such wanderings it was that he met the occasions for his most remarkable miracles.

It was such a progress as this that had now just begun.

The contrast to this picture could not have been thrown in more artistically, by opposition of circumstances, had the scene been arranged merely for effect, for, in truth, nature and life are the true artists.

A blind man there was, sitting by the wayside. Oh, to be blind! To see no face; to read no book; to behold no field, or tree, or flower; to have no morning and no evening, but unbroken night forever; to see no coming spring, no changes in the purpling bark of yet unleaved trees, no sprouting grass, no coming birds; to see neither father nor mother, neither friend nor companion; and oh! to lose the ineffable bounty of God in little children, that fill the eyes with such delight that one might for hours ask only to wander and gaze upon them; to be among those that see, and you not to see; to be unable to look when one cries, "Lo here—lo there!" to almost forget that you do not see, and accept darkness as if it were light, timid steps and groping for manly walking—this is indeed a bitter thing!

Yet there are many consolations to the blind who have kindred, and maintenance, and home. But to be blind and be a beggar; to make your misfortune the capital of your trade; to parade your sightless eyes; to sit with professional expectancy till the face fixes itself to the piteous look of mendicancy; to solicit and gather nothing; to become used to rebuff and neglect; to sit all day by the street or road, as a fisher by a stream; to cast your angle for a dole, as he his bait for a hungry fish—this is bitter; bitterer yet if the victim feels his degradation, and still worse if he does not, for then the man is blind inwardly: he has lost two pairs of eyes, the outward and the inner.

It was such a one that sat begging by the wayside. It was near, I have said, to Jericho. Past him there would flow the double stream. He had chosen his place skillfully. It was where two streams met—the coming in and the going out of the people, to and from the city; those whose journey was almost done, and who felt good-natured at the prospect of soon reaching home; and those who were just going away, and were lithe and fresh upon the outset of their travel. No step could fall and his ear not detect it. Rendered acute by serving for two senses, the ear discriminated whether it was an old man, by the heavy and unspringing tread; or midmanhood, by its energy and haste; or youth, by its nimbleness and waywardness; whether the soft step was a maiden's, or the heavy tramp a soldier's.

To such an ear there came a sound which it could not miss. What was it? Many feet, and the murmuring sound of voices. An army? Was there an insurrection, then? It was not a measured tread—it was no army. Was it some procession of people for religious observance? No festival day was this. Such days were too good harvests for the blind man to miss the calendar of charity. It was a strange sound coming on—drawing nearer. He turned to it. Now came the clearer sounds of those that led the crowd. Their voices grew near, and he cried out, as they came, asking what

it meant. The more affable of them told him, "Jesus of Nazareth passes by."

What thing has happened to him? His face grows pale. He trembles all over. His hands begin to learn a new art of supplication. What was there in this name, Jesus of Nazareth, that should work such an excitement as fills the poor beggar? Ah! he had heard of him. Who had not? It was he who had raised the dying from death. It was he who had restored cripples innumerable. He had touched with coolness those that were parched with fevers. Wherever he went, somebody got well. Whoever had ailments, and came to Jesus, was healed of whatsoever plague he had. The news was not sluggish. Every body had heard of it. The very air was full of it. He had heard and pondered it. He had doubtless known that Christ had put clay on the eyes of a blind man—a man blind from birth—and restored him to sight. Know who it was? Indeed he did! He had promised himself, I doubt not, often, that if ever he had a chance, there should be an opportunity for a new miracle. And now, oh, unlooked-for happiness! oh, joyful chance! here came that very being who filled the land with tumult, the priests with rage, and the people with joy.

Our troubles are not at all times alike troublesome to us. Even the sea ceases its motion at times, and its surf forgets to murmur. Griefs and cares, bitter memories, and heavy troubles intermit their tyranny, and come again with redoubled oppressions. Like tides, sorrows seem sometimes to flow out, and leave the sands bare. But again they sometimes rush in upon us like tides, as if they feared that something should have snatched from them their lawful prey.

And just so, I trow, came over this begging blind man, at this moment, an unutterable pang at the consciousness of his blindness. A moment before he could have laughed, and shot back a merry quip at some thoughtless jest that touched his eyes. But now that the Healer was come, now that he might be restored, he was in a serious and earnest mood.

Why, to open a blind man's eyes is to give him the whole world! And oh! to be so near a cure, to be within the sound of that voice that commanded life and death, that awoke the grave, that drove diseases from the body and sins from the soul, and yet to lose the chance! Such a piercing sense there must have been of his deprivation, such an unutterable desire for sight, such eager hope that his deliverance was at hand, and such trembling fear lest it might fail, that it is no wonder that he lost all sense of propriety, and did so cry and demean himself as to strike surprise and offense to the nearest men around about him.

And what did he cry? "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me."

It is given in Luke's gospel with some variations, and with some additional circumstances, though the account is substantially like that in Mark.

"Hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me."

It is a little interesting to notice how differently a man's troubles strike him and those that are only spectators.

While he thus cried out, and the irresistible necessity of imploration was upon him, while his heart was like a rushing river, and was seeking to flow out from his mouth, his eyes being stopped, those about him naturally had a sense of the violation of propriety; for it was out of place for a beggar to make such a clamor as the royal procession with the Master of life and death was going by.

And so they said to him, "Hush! be still! be decent! be quiet!" They "charged him that he should hold his peace." But what did he care for their advice? He walked over it as lordly as ever a king walked among peasants. Nay, "he cried the more, a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me." The attempt to stop him only excited him, and made more impetuous that which was sufficiently earnest before.

Now the scene changes; the crowd surge, and stop, and

gather around the centre; for the Master has heard and seen, and he knows all. "Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called." And now all were curious, and with that fitful change which is so characteristic of the ignorant, they who before had been clamorous to keep him still, ran good-naturedly to say to him, "Be of good comfort; rise; he calleth thee." And the blind man, "casting away his garment," throwing every thing away from him that encumbered him, sprang toward the sound, and wondered from whence it came. He "rose, and came to Jesus." He could not see him. He could only know of his presence by the sound of his voice. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" He knew what he wanted to have done, but Christ always loved to be asked. "The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight." There was not in all the world another thing that he would have Christ to give him. He might have offered him wealth, honor, all bounty of life; but the intense desire of his soul was wrapped up in that one thing—"Cure me of my ailment; give me light; make me as other men that see the sun, and all the fair things of earth; heal me." Then Christ spake, and it was done. He that brought forth the light in the morning of creation, by a word brought dawn upon this blind man's eyes. He said to him, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." No man ever put trust in Christ that did not find him more than he has promised. And what was the way that he went? "Immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way."

Luke, in narrating the same scene, says, "Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God."

Here was another of those marvels. The crowd, no longer indifferent, now, doubtless, gather about to participate in wondrous joy, and praise God, when the man began to give utter-

ance to his pious feeling. It seems that he saw twice: he saw with the outward man and with the inward man; and he was healed more than he himself meant to be.

Was he the only blind man? Was his blindness the only misfortune? Since the days of Christ to this hour, has the Savior, in his providence or his grace, passed by in any way, when there have not sat blind men heedless, ignorant of his coming? I am not speaking alone of those who are blind so that they can not see the sun, the moon, the stars, and all the endless objects that God has created. There is another realm besides the physical. There are other things besides those that can be discerned with the material eye. There is a spiritual realm. And that man who can not perceive spiritual truth is blind. That man who can not perceive God in nature is blind. The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. The world is full of the evidences of his being and presence. And yet there are many that gaze minutely upon all these letters written upon sky and ground, and never discern the secret of the literature. They admire nature, but never God. They admire the treasures of nature, but never the Hand that created them.

There be many that do not see the providence of God as it is displayed in them, and through them, and about them, in the order of things, and in the accomplishment of divine purposes. In the complex affairs of men, in all the concerns of life and society, there is a living God, divining, deciding, ordering; and yet there be many that set their faces against this procession of things, and neither discern it nor understand it.

Nay, there be those that understand neither the things that are outside of them, nor the things that are in them; men that do not know what they are themselves, and that do not see what is their miserable condition. The blind man knew that he was blind; but in the case of those of whom I speak, there is added to their blindness the curse of not knowing that they are blind. Like those mentioned in the Apoca-

lypse, they are naked, and hungry, and sick, and miserable, though they are where there is an abundance of clothing, and food, and all that they need.

There are those who see nothing in spiritual life; nothing in their own sinful condition and its misery; nothing in the Christian's life—no joy, no triumph, no argument of courage and hope.

There are those who see no beauty in the source of Christian life—in the revelation of God. Especially they are unenlightened in all the elements of the character of Christ—in all the processes of his official work. In all his promises or truths there is to them nothing that has form or comeliness. They look upon these things, they hear them described, and they follow the disquisition, and yet they are blind to them.

Are there no such blind persons here? Are there none that have looked wistfully upon the offices of the Church, and longed that they might see? None that have often and often, in mind, turned toward God and wished that they might discern? None upon whom spiritual darkness rests like a pall? None that have sought by various ways to lift the veil and curtain, and have obtained no benefit, but grown rather worse by much helping?

It is to such that Jesus comes to-night. He passes by whenever his name or word is proclaimed. As along the road from Jericho he passed within sound of the blind man, so to-night, by his Spirit and by his truth, he passes not far from every one that is here. And if there were the same sense of misfortune, the same intense yearning for relief, the same impetuous outcry, and the same irresistible faith with which Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, came to Christ, there should be no blind man among you unsuccored or unhealed.

But there are special cases of blindness. There are those who seem to have lost, almost entirely, the sense of their condition, so as no longer to be able to gauge, in any wise, their progress. Men grow worse and worse, harder and harder, and go farther and farther from God and from hope, and yet do

not see nor appreciate their danger. There are those who are fast preparing to leave these earthly scenes, who have upon them all the signs and tokens that they are departing, and yet they are blind to these marks of decay, which all others note. You only do not notice the frosts upon your own head. The teeth drop from their places, the eye grows dim, the hearing is a little less acute, there is a heavier tread as you walk, there are various infirmities that are beginning to touch you, and that are paying their visits to you more and more frequently. Others see that you are past the climax of life; but you are blind, and you see nothing of it.

Old age comes as autumn and winter come. There is a color to the leaf in the tree; one and another tree begins to glow with yellow and red; for when death comes in nature, it comes not with signs of black, but with all glowing colors and elements of attractive beauty.

Then the trees grow thin and bald at the top, as men do, and, one by one, all things retreat to the root; the fields become bare; the hill-sides take on a russet color; all nature strips herself. As one casts aside his raiment for sleep, so all things token the advance of autumn and the coming of winter. We know these things in respect to the year and the things beneath us; we do not recognize them as true in respect to ourselves. But they are as true of us as of the year. We are tending toward the root; we are drawing near the final sleep. Others see it and know it. We only are blind, and do not understand it.

There are those whose joys are passing or past. There are those who have gone far along in the world toward that point from which they shall leave it, and all the signs and tokens are that they are marked for death. Is there any thing more miserable in this world than to see how men cling to life when it has lost its savor and all its benefits? The old who are decrepit, who are without taste or sight, or much activity, or function, for whose places the young are waiting, and who should be garnered, and who should long to be gath-

ered in—that they should be serene and patient so long as it is God's will that they should abide here, is wondrously beautiful; but that they should cling with trembling hands to the things of this world, and long to live, and find to-morrow empty, and yet long for another empty day, and find that empty, and yet beseechingly petition that God would lengthen out their days—this is piteous in the extreme. Oh, to be gone when a man can do no more here! Oh, to fly when summer is over, as birds fly to other lands and other skies! But how many there are that clasp the bough, and fain would sit upon the tree without a leaf through all the shivering snows of winter! To see men who are infirm, who are worn out though they have not wasted half their years, and who are marked for misery, the least willing to go, the most reluctant to give up life, the most eager for it; to see men who are poor, who are trodden down, who know that their prospects are in the main destroyed, whose faces are scarred with sadness and dissatisfaction, who do not know that life is misfortune and death is emancipation, and who yet long for more of life—to see such men is painful without measure. Wretched, miserable, blind are they.

And how many are there of such! How many are there that have tasted the ways of wickedness; that have sought, in various ways, pleasure, so called; that have entered upon the foul career of intoxication, and experienced the insanity and delirium of it; that have looked for happiness in the ways of illicit pleasure, and that have only grasped hideous shadows, and tears, and bitter pangs of body and soul! How many are there that have learned the deceitful ways of craft, and cunning, and deception, and know it, and do not know it; that have parted from virtue, and know that, and do not know it; that have been embraced in the sorcerer's arms, and know that, and do not know it! They know that they are struck through with wickedness, and that in the main it does not make them happy. They know that running out of the present to seek some promised good is always illusive

and delusive, and yet how blindly they go on in the same way, and seek the same things! How many are there that are blind in a thousand ways that I can not stop now to describe!

All that live without a thought or sight of immortality; all that live without a vision of the eternal blessedness of that land which awaits God's children; all that live without seeing those dear ones that have gone out from among us; all that have no consciousness of God, of Jesus, not far from them; all that live as though the opaque terraqueous globe were all that there is of substance, and as though this miserable life were all that there is of experience; all that live without perceiving the wonder of the spiritual realm which is constantly passing before them—all these are blind.

Ah! that there were some touch that could be applied to their eyes, that their eyes might be opened, and that they might behold God, and heaven, and the judgment seat, and the coming doom, or the coming reward!

Are there none here to-night whose convictions follow my words, and who say to themselves, "I am blind?" Are there none that have drifted so far away from their earlier instructions and faith that their memories of them seem almost like the memories of a foreign shore? Are there none who remember the days when their mother took them on her knee, and folded their hands to prayer? Are there none that remember the village church and the Sabbath day? Do you not hear, with your memory, that far-off swinging bell? It rings in the valley where you were brought up. It rings over the home where your father and mother, and your brothers and sisters dwelt. It rings of all your early associations. Are there not those that walk with the air of the scoffer, and in the ways of vice and crime, who are the children of Christian parents? Have you not had many and many a struggle with your own conscience as you have been going from bad to worse? Have you not gone far toward, not darkness only, but blackness forever? Are there not those

that feel burdened by their sins? I think that there are sometimes raised up lights that strike through this spiritual blindness, and enable men to catch a glimpse of their unfortunate condition. I think that in the history of the worst men there are luminous days, revelatory days, days of memory, in which they are made to feel their present misery, and long and yearn for deliverance.

To every such a one I proclaim that Jesus who walks up and down the ways of life; who passes every whither; who in all his passage is going about to relieve, to release, to restore; whose mission it is to give sight to the blind, to give hearing to the deaf, to give to dead hearts life, and to bring, out of the sepulchres of men's wicked natures, in blessed resurrection, their spiritual selves. I preach that Jesus to you who is ten thousand times more earnest, and instant, and present, and willing to give you spiritual sight than ever he was to give Bartimæus physical sight.

Rise. Call for help, if you feel that you need it. Call, not once, nor twice, but until your cry is heard. If checked, if hindered, if seemingly drawn away, call again, and put your heart and soul into the supplication. And there shall come to you the voice, the influence of one that says, "Bid him come to me." Go to Jesus, and if he says, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?"—and he says it to every needy supplicant—say with him of old, "Lord, that I might receive my sight."

Oh yes, to see—to see what you are, what your nature is, what your character, what your course, what your destiny; to see what is the glory reserved by God for those that serve and follow him; to see the sweet face of Jesus reconciling your souls to God; to see all the blessed joys that await those who through faith and patience are to inherit the promises—this is vision, indeed! this is seeing, truly!

Oh, ye blind, let me call for you. Jesus is not far from many that are here. Perhaps he calls you who will not call to him. Are there not in this house those that feel the need

of Christ; that feel themselves lost without the Savior; that are willing to take the divine and recreative touch? Come, gather with me around about the feet of him who ever liveth to do merciful works. Let me plead for you, and may you ratify every word of imploration that I shall utter in your behalf.

PRAYER.

Blessed Savior, art thou passing? Pass not by. Here are those that need thee. We know thy wondrous power. We are those that thou aforetime didst heal, and shall we forget that darkness which was in our souls? What cheerless years were those in which the earth meant nothing, and life was worth nothing! What years were those in which we sought, and found not; in which we went chained, and could not loose our shackles! What wondrous joy was that of the morning when thou didst come, O Jesus, to our heart; when out of thy word thou didst seem to us to rise statelier than any vision that ever came before the mind of prophet, or seer, or any other one! Jesus, the helpful, the patient, the healing; Jesus, come to nurse, to nourish, to teach; Jesus, come to take a sinner in his sins, thou knowest, and we remember, the blessedness of the revelation that sank down into our souls and transformed them. Thou knowest the unutterable joy, the strange and wild delight, with which we hailed thee, filling heaven and earth with praises of thee. All things did praise thee, and we more than all.

Lord Jesus, many days have passed since then, and many things have we forgotten, and many found out, but this we have never forgotten—thy wondrous power to bring light to the dark and distressed soul. And nothing hath ever been revealed to us comparable to the joy of Jesus formed in us a hope of glory. It has been our comfort when we were desponding. It has been our strength when we were wearied and exhausted. It has been our courage. We have dared, and cared not for men. We have ventured on new and untried ways. We have cast anchor, amid the darkness of night, in turbulent waters, and without fear have awaited the calmness and brightness of the morning. We have gone trusting in thee, and have never been betrayed, and now we are ready to walk through the very valley and shadow of death. We fear no evil. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort us. Give what thou wilt, thou canst not trouble us; and

take away what thou wilt, we shall bear it. There shall be clear skies above, for thou art there. There shall be treasure in reserve. Our throne awaits us, and our sceptre. Thou canst not destroy whom thou lovest. Our hope is in thee, our trust is in thee, Lord Jesus. We were blind, but now we see.

And are there not in thy presence those that are as blessed as we were? Are there not such here to-night, who, like ourselves, were taught by Christian parents, and who, like ourselves, were instructed in the word of God, and in the duties and ordinances of religion? O Lord Jesus, wilt thou not pass this way, and wilt thou not call for them? We beseech of thee that they may see; that they may have this wondrous miracle of grace wrought upon them; that their inward sight may be opened; that they may fall down before the majesty of God, and with ineffable joy seek the unexampled favor of Christ, and accept and understand those holy glowing words which make known to men what is the inspiration of the divine spirit.

There are many that are now coming toward the end of their years. Let not their sun go down in darkness, but rescue them. There are those upon whom rest heavily the burdens of life, which gall the back, so that they can not bear them. We beseech of thee that they may not be crushed by care and trouble.

We pray for all that need comfort. Wilt thou comfort them? Enlighten the dark, raise the faint, cheer the disconsolate, heal the sick.

Grant, we beseech of thee, mercy to all in thy presence. Though they are not worthy, yet do it for thine own majesty's sake, and for the glory of thine own name.

Teach us better to pray for men. Teach us the divine love of impleading, not because thou art hard, and doth withstand any earnest supplication, but because thou art moved, as we are, with importunity. It pleases thee to give, but it pleases thee better to give things that are earnestly sought. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt teach us how to pray. And may we pray much one for another; for the glory of thy kingdom; for the welfare of men; for our own household; for our dear children; for all that have shown us any kindness in life; for our enemies and thy enemies; for all that are making with us the perilous pass of this stormy sea. We pray for all, and as long as we live we will pray, and when we can pray no more we will rise to glory to shout thy praise in heaven to the Father, to the Son, and to the Spirit. Amen.

XIV.

Martha and Mary;

or,

Christian Workers and Thinkers.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, December, 1866.

Martha and Mary.

"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus's feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."—Luke, x., 38–42.

This is one of those windows through which, being open, we look in and see something of the interior of Christ's life. This took place, as we learn from other passages, at Bethany, not a great way from Jerusalem.* It was at the house, as we should say, of Lazarus, since the house is usually designated by the male rather than by the female members of the household.

These two sisters, Martha and Mary, and this brother Lazarus, probably constituted the whole family. It was a family of wealth and distinction. That they were wealthy is indicated by the entertainments which they seem to have given, and the facility with which one of their number could purchase a costly ointment as a gift of affection. That they were distinguished is indicated, not by the fact that the Savior was their guest so often, but that when Lazarus died, there poured forth from the city not a few to mingle their tears with the sufferers. This is not the history of poverty. The family that is in straitened circumstances, or that is without

* The other principal passages relating to this family are the following: Matt., xxvi., 6–13; Mark, xiv., 3–9; John, xii., 1–9; John, xi.

note, have but few neighbors for joy or sorrow; and the fact that this family had numerous sympathizers in their bereavement implies that they were a family of at least some local influence.

One of the remarkable things stated in respect to this household is not only that Christ was accustomed frequently to be with them, but that he *loved* them. It is true that God loves all; and in so far as Christ was setting forth the divine nature, he undoubtedly had love to all; but there is something different from that meant. There were those among the disciples of Christ that attracted his special liking. In other words, Christ had personal likings, personal affections, individual preferences, as we have, founded on the beauty and attractiveness of certain dispositional and moral elements. And here is a family that stood out in his history; for, at one time and another, it is mentioned, in respect to each of them, that he loved them. The sisters sent to him, saying, "He whom thou lovest is sick." It is understood, therefore, that Christ was much attached to Lazarus. Then the evangelist speaks of Mary as one that Christ loved. And Martha is spoken of as the Martha that Christ loved.

So we have evidence of one kind and another that this was a good and wholesome family. Without doubt they were of a good stock and a good disposition. They maintained in the household, evidently, such a carriage—there was so much character, there was so much duty fulfilled, that even such a one as Christ, amid all the jarrings and discomforts of human imperfection, repaired from Jerusalem to their abode to find rest. He gave them his confidence and his heart. He did not hesitate to say that he loved them. Nor was he ashamed to have it said of them, "These are the ones that the Master loves."

I am glad that Christ was such a one; for that view of God is cheerless that represents him as so serene, and tranquil, and self-contained, and remote, and unsympathizing that he does not need, nor often accept, the individuality or spe-

cialty of personal love. There is something frigid about such a view. It repels.

I should like to behold icebergs, but I should not like to sleep under them or near them. I should like to look at them as marvels of beauty, but it is not where they are that I should choose to have my home. And there may be lifted up a conception of God so massive, so grand, and so remote from human sympathy, that, though we may admire it, we can not love it. What we need is a God that, while we admire, we shall love, since we are commanded to love him with all the mind, and heart, and soul, and strength. Where Christ is represented, therefore, as having great depth of feeling, as endearing himself to those whom he loved, and as being beloved by them, just as you are by those to whom you make yourself pleasing, it indicates an element in his character which is a thousand times more attractive and winning than any that could be shown by a mere abstract delineation of the perfectness of the divine attributes. You will perceive how strong was the feeling which he excited in the bosom of this family, which we may perhaps call a *Christian family*—a Jewish Christian family.

Mary and Martha represent the two types of piety which have always existed—the outward and the inward. One was busy with *acts*, the other with *dispositions* and *reflections*. One was *doing*, the other was *being* and *pondering*. Yet both of them, though in different ways, were strongly drawn in confidence and love to Christ. Martha added double alacrity to every step and motion. And when Christ was in the house, she was always, if possible, more than ordinarily active. Too much could not be done for him; nothing was too good for him; and those who did not join her in her zeal to minister to his comfort seemed to her to be dishonoring the one that her soul loved. She chid them. She spoke even frowardly of her sister Mary.

Mary loved him with a love that had no expression. It was pent up within. It had its heights and depths, but it had

neither word nor gestures. Only once was there an exhibition of it—when, seized with an ecstasy, when love mounted into adoration, she broke the alabaster box of precious ointment on the head of Christ! That was the symbol of her love. While Martha made the house ring with quick, flying footsteps; while every room, with things removed or brought in, was a witness of her love, shown by ten thousand serviceable deeds, Mary loved, not only as much as Martha, but more, because she was more capable of loving. But neither by deed or word did she show her love as Martha showed hers. It is said of her, "She sat at Jesus' feet." As a child, that by a thousand troubles is pursued to tears, betakes itself at last to its mother's lap, and, surrounded by her arms, forgets them every one, and is as still as if it were a flower and could not speak, so, Mary found, that simply to sit and look upon her Christ was enough. Or, if it was not, there was no expression more.

And as it was with the sisters, so it is still. We have in every church Marthas—faithful Christians, laborious with an outward development of activity; and Marys, not efficient in outward activity, but chiefly deep in the inward life and rich in the soul's affections.

The brother appears only as an object upon whom Christ performed a miracle. I read in your hearing, in the opening services, an account of the scenes that were transacted during his sickness, at his death, and after his burial.

Let us draw from this little picture, as it were by the wayside, and Christ's connection with it, some lessons of practical moment.

Let us first look at workers and thinkers—using the word *think* in the largest sense, so that it shall include the whole action of the mind; or, that piety which works upon visible materials, and that which works upon the invisible; that piety which is developed toward this world, and that piety which is developed toward the other world. I have said that these two classes will always be found co-ordinated in the

Church. They spring from certain organic tendencies. They are true to nature. Oh, that it might be in the Church as it was in this household, that they that ponder and they that do, that they that think and they that act, should be sisters! for, although there were little jars, slight disagreements, there was not more of discord than there is in any good piece of music.

Martha was not peevish or fretful—certainly not in our ordinary acceptation of that term. She and Mary loved one another, and they both loved Christ. But Martha did not understand Mary, although Mary understood Martha. And so it still is. Those that are genuine Christians, that are sincere workers, though they work outwardly, and work on, multiplying their tasks, never growing weary of them, or becoming easily rested, are well understood by the deeper but more quiet natures. These last know their own superior life. They understand, also, the others. But the former do not understand the latter. Mary always understands both herself and her sister Martha; but Martha, though she understands herself, does not understand Mary.

Still there are persons that, deeply loving and faithfully serving Christ, do not show it, and are chid by those that, with their bustling activities and with their instant industries, fill up the hours, and wish that there were more hours in every day that they might fill. How often they turn upon those that never appear in the street or in the committee with the feeling that, because they do not serve Christ as *they* serve him, they are not serving him at all! As though there were not more ways than one of serving Christ! As though there were no piety except that which works outwardly! Nay, as Mary helped Martha in the household, and Martha Mary, so it should be in this world. Those that work for piety in external ways should lean upon those that turn more toward the other life. And those that live inwardly should help themselves by the practicalness of those that abound in outward Christian life.

We find in Martha the faults, or tendencies to faults, to which the outward life of piety, where it is exclusive, is liable. Her activity evidently was excessive. There are those that wear themselves out with incessant activity. And usually in proportion as we are indolent we find excuses for our inactivity, while, in proportion as we are intense in our activity, we condemn ourselves for not doing more. Men that are conscientious condemn themselves on the side where they are strongest. They are conscious of duty in the direction of their strong faculties, and they always condemn themselves where relatively they are best developed. Doubtless Martha condemned herself for indolence, who scarcely took a moment of rest the whole day long. Her activity broke out into anxiety. The carefulness here spoken of is not attention to duty. The apostle says, "I would have you without carefulness." I would *not* have my children without carefulness. They never start on any errand that I do not say to them, "Now, be careful!" We enjoin upon men in the affairs of life the duty of being careful; for *carefulness* means, with us, attention to what one is doing. It used to mean being full of cares. It was care-*full*. It was *being anxious*. When it is said that Martha was careful, it is meant that she was one of those slender, nervous persons, of overwrought sensibility, that labor incessantly under pressure of anxiety from youth to age. She suffered because she never felt that she was enough active. Full was never full with her. There was always that state of mind in her experience which we call *anxiety*. Did you never see persons that are kind-hearted and good-natured, but that are continually anxious? Not that they are peevish; not that they are cross; but they are filled with anxiety. Did you never see a boiler that carried just enough steam, so that there was no sound in the machinery? And have you never seen a boiler that carried a little too much steam, so that it hissed at every rivet, making a disagreeable sound all day and all night? There are persons that carry a little more

steam than they can work, and that sing and hiss all the time, and Martha was one of those.

Where this anxiety is brought suddenly in collision with those that are associated with us, and expresses itself with sharpness, it is called *chiding* if you are charitable, and *fretfulness* or *peevishness* if you are a little cross yourself. And so it seemed to be in Martha's case. When Christ came, nothing must be left undone that could be done for him. Every room must be set aright. Bountiful provision must be made. The servants flew on wings of zeal by her direction. When she had for hours bustled about the house, till weariness had come upon her, suddenly she came upon Mary, and found her sitting at the feet of Christ, taking matters very calmly; and she could not but fret at that. She says, "Bid her that she help me." You will see that this amounted to censoriousness. A great many who would be ashamed to make a comparison between their own virtues and those of another openly, do it covertly; and if the Savior had expressed his whole feeling to Martha concerning herself, he probably would have said, "Martha, you know you are active and vigilant, and when you rebuke Mary for being indolent, you call my attention to the fact that you glow with zeal, and that she does nothing; and your condemnation of her is self-praise."

Are there any Marthas here? Are there here any good women, that really want to do good, that love their friends, and that rejoice in hospitalities toward them, but that carry their life with such sensitiveness that they turn on those very friends with criticism or ill-timed severities? Is there not such a thing as loving outwardly, and having that nervous industry which, carried too far, becomes querulousness or censoriousness?

Martha's fault was not her outward activity, but that it led to wrong judgments, and depreciating comparisons, and to the lowest form of Christian life. Yet Martha was good, true, honest, trustworthy, or else it never would have been

said that Jesus loved her. And it will do you good, when you are vexed with people's faults, to remember that a person may be loved of God though he has many faults. You have many faults, and it will do your soul good to know that God can get along with faulty people. And it may help you to get along with them to know that God has to get along with them, and with you too. I beg you to notice, too, how sweetly Christ chided. I can conceive that one might have power to raise the dead, as in the case of Lazarus, or of the widow's son at Nain; but the contemplation of this power in God does not bring before me such a vision of his moral character as the thought of the sweetness with which Christ looked on those in whom were hateful things; his very rebuke was balm, and his admonition healing. When the disciples quarreled in his presence as to who should be first in the coming kingdom, Christ took a little child, and held him up before them, and said, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." How gently he said to them, "Whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all." It was not anger; it was not rebuke; it was instruction.

With this household Christ was accustomed to dwell, and he loved them in spite of their faults. If God loved only the faultless, who of us could ever stand?

Look next at the true meaning of Christ's preference as represented in this scene. It must not be interpreted as a depreciation of work and enterprise. His own example showed that he was not averse to activity. He *went about doing good.* Three times he traversed the whole length of his country on his mission. The activity of Christ was astonishing. He is said to have labored day and night, violating the laws of prudence in relation to the body. He actually fell asleep on the sea from over-fatigue. Often he had not time to eat. Such a one would not find fault with a true and zealous performance of household duties, since the household is the highest church on earth, and those that serve in it are God's sweetest messengers.

It was not, then, because Martha was so active that she was in fault. Nor is it to be assumed that Mary was not, in her own way and at her own times, an actor. Mary unquestionably performed active duties. But a nature whose activity springs from fullness and richness of soul, and whose deeds carry breadth and depth of life, is higher than a nature that merely acts without deep feeling. Soul-feeling stands higher in the ranking of God and Christ than action. Action is valuable from two elements. It is valuable, first, from the changes which it works in affairs. One of the values of activity is what it does. The amount of mind and soul which it introduces into things is its other value. It is what you bring down and incarnate that measures the value of action. A fly is more active than a bee. It is amazing how active the fly is. To look at him, you would think him a master mechanic. He buzzes all summer long. And yet he is not worth his keeping. The bee buzzes too, but his buzzing means something. He produces much and eats little. The fly produces nothing and eats much. There may be an activity which, though it has few results, is more effective than an activity that has many. And a nature may work out few effects, and yet each one of these may be so clothed with high moral feelings as to exceed in value more numerous results that are not thus clothed.

Take the action of weeping. It is not always the same. A child weeps, and what does it mean? Nothing at all. Some children cry as easily as flowers spill their dew in the morning, and their crying means no more than that a flower has shaken itself. But when the child has grown to be a man, and has long been fortified against declarative grief, and something happens which brings tears from his eyes, his weeping means more than it meant when the child cried.

Take another instance. In the passage that I read to you this morning, it is declared that Christ came to the grave, and stood, and, seeing the sorrow of the sisters, and sympathizing with their trouble, wept. That means a great deal; but

there was another occasion on which Christ wept when his weeping meant even more. He stood and looked over Jerusalem, contemplating her future and her past, and wept over her. When he wept at the grave of Lazarus it was touching; when he wept over Jerusalem it was sublime.

Take the fact of Judas's betrayal of Christ. He kissed him —for that was the sign. On another occasion, one who had been a sinner approached Christ, anointed his head, washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed them. How much more was there in the penitence of that woman, which expressed itself in those humble tasks of love, than there was in the betraying kiss of Judas!

A look is not always the same. When Christ looked upon men transiently, as I look upon you, one and another, his look was of but little meaning; but when, after three years of deprivation and suffering, greater trouble came, his disciples forsook him, and he was arraigned in the judgment-hall, and Peter, who stood not far from him, being accused of being his friend, denied it, not only once, but the second and the third time, and he turned and looked at Peter, and Peter went out and wept bitterly, how much more there was in the look of Christ than when he was with his disciples, and simply looked upon them as upon friends! It is what an act has in it that determines what is its power of usefulness.

Now a person may for many weeks multiply activities and do special things which do not mean much morally, but a nature that is full of deep thought, of deep fervor, or sacred ecstasy, of faith, and hope, and love, may perform one single act which shall amount to more in moral value, as God rates it, than a ceaseless, buzzing activity of a lower nature. And it was this ranking of natures that took place when Christ preferred Mary's comparative stillness to Martha's bustling ways.

One step further, now, in this history, may be taken understandingly, namely, that of considering the sublimity and beauty of Mary's outward activity when it was developed.

We are to suppose that she ordinarily performed her part of the household duties. In so far as Christ was concerned, she was one of those that loved to cherish her thoughts and feelings in silence, rather than to manifest them in outward service. But when she did come to that state in which she could no longer seclude her thoughts and feelings, how beautiful was her manifestation of them! I will read the scene which is described in the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew:

"Now, when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she has wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always. For in that she has poured this ointment on my body she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

The evening fire and the light have gone out. What raiment Martha provided no man knows; what food, what comfort, what luxury, no man knows. The endless and repetitious activities of Martha have passed away without a record and without remembrance. But it has been as Christ declared it should be, and it shall be to the end, that this solitary act which Mary performed, though it was small, shall be mentioned to her honor and praise as long as the Gospel shall be preached. The fragrance of this ointment is in the world yet. This noble soul, by silent thoughts wrought up to an enthusiasm and ecstasy, expressed her love and affection for Christ in this mute symbol of anointing him, and thus joined herself to her Master in death as she was joined to him in life; and Christ said, "It shall be made known as long as the Gospel

shall be preached." And when the last spicy breeze shall have died away from Araby the blessed, when the last garden shall have been planted and shall have withered, and when the last rose, and honeysuckle, and violet, dying, shall have given out their perfume, the fragrance of this deed shall rise fresh upon the air, and smell sweet before God.

In closing, let me say, first, that there is a place in Christ's kingdom for all dispositions. Bring what you have. Though your gifts are of the lowest, and your activities are of the least importance, bring them. It does not need that you should be first in order to be accepted. It may be that you are like Martha, who brought to Christ's service much activity, and but little depth of thought and feeling. It may be that your duties are mostly of a physical nature. If so, let them be consecrated, and Christ will accept them at your hands. It may be that an outward life of activity and usefulness, such as you see in others, seems to be withheld from you; but remember that there is such a thing as an externally inactive life that means more than one externally active.

There be many that sit in the silence of the household, when all others are asleep, pondering over the leanness of their service, their inactivity. They grieve in their souls, and wish that they could do more for Christ. They wander off in silent thoughts and secret fancies, and are much with him; but they return to chide themselves often, because their life is so poor, so barren. To such let me say, holy thoughts are acceptable to God. Deep meditations and reverent states of mind God looks upon as if they were outward acts, and accepts them.

There be many who envy those that have gifts of external service. There be many that say, "Oh, if I had access to men; if it were permitted to me to persuade them; if I had the tongue of an orator or the pen of a poet; if I could go about doing good in this world, how grateful I would be to God!" It would be your duty to be grateful if you had these gifts; but remember that there are other ways besides this

declaratory and exhibitory way of doing good. If you are in the depths of your soul reverencing and worshiping God, then you stand higher in his sight than one who merely has the capacity to do outward work. There is many a poor, obscure parishioner who has neither eloquence nor oratory, but the offering of whose heart God sees to be more priceless than these things. It is not that which makes the most impression on men that makes the most impression on God. It is that which is deepest in your conscience, and love, and faith, that is the noblest offering.

There are those that by sickness are prematurely laid aside from usefulness, that are bed-ridden, and that feel that, in being denied the opportunity of engaging in the active duties of life, they have lost life itself. But it will be found that it is not the sunflower, gairish and possessed of power to lift itself up, that is most esteemed; but the hidden flower that blossoms in the shadow of the hedge, that in every adversity is fragrant still. Christ will do as you do that never wear the sunflower, but often the violet. God will take the humble ones, and make them into that precious knot which he will wear on his very heart.

If God has called you to an inactive sphere, he has called you there that, by holy thought and affection, you may wreathe for him offerings of silent love, and hope, and desire, which are more precious in his sight than any outward activities can be.

Let us, then, have this love that Mary had, and be content, like her, not to walk in the high and eminent places of the earth, but to sit at the feet of Jesus. And he who, sitting there, knows how to love, looking into the divine face to find out heaven, is not, be assured, far from the heart of Christ.

XV.

Moth-eaten Garments.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath evening, April 5th, 1863.

Moth-eaten Garments.

"Your garments are moth-eaten."—James, v., 2.

In earlier ages of the world riches assumed but few forms. Houses and land could scarcely be much to a Bedouin Arab who pastured his flocks wherever he could find sustenance, and carried his house and all his property with him. Bonds, notes, mortgages, bills, are the wealth-signs of a highly commercial people. In early days, besides silver and gold, which always and every where have been considered wealth, garments were stored up, and were regarded as an evidence of riches. It is so in a narrow sphere even yet. Many a thrifty housekeeper deems herself rich in the fullness of her wardrobe; in stores of linen; in materials laid up for household uses; in beds and bedding; in napkins and toweling; in silk, and cotton, and linen, and wool, and feathers. These are household wealth.

Against all these things time has a grudge. They wear out if you use them, and waste more if you do not. If you store them away, mildew and damp searches for them to rot them. If you too incautiously expose them to the cleansing air, you give knowledge of your treasure, excite cupidity, and draw the thief to your dwelling. And while men covet, and the elements enviously consume your garments and your fabrics, there are insects created, it would seem, expressly to feed upon them. Why not? It is the order of nature. To eat and be eaten are the two terms of life. To destroy and to be destroyed is the history of animated creation. The moth would appear to be peculiarly adapted to take proper-

ty in that condition in which a vigilance against all other enemies leaves it. We mark aggressors; we take account of violence, and of the various inroads of the elements; and, having put our property out of all danger of them, there is yet appointed a farther enemy.

First is the moth-miller. It is harmless. Small, silken, and of pearly white, it hovers without sound at twilight, or in our dark rooms. It is not impertinent, like the robust flies of summer. It carries no sting, like vexatious insects that pester your skin. It does not sound in your ear the shrill notes of the cricket, or the stridulous scrapings of the locust, or the fine, shuddering hum of the musquito. It does not nibble and gnaw with the mouse and rat; nor, as roaches do, indecently overrun your food. It is most fair, silent, harmless. Not a sunbeam could do less harm in moving through the air. And yet every housewife springs after it with electric haste. It is a dreaded pest—not for what it is, but for what it becomes. It is the mother of moths.

And there are ten thousand moral moths just like them—soft, satiny, silent, harmless in themselves; but they lay eggs, and the eggs are not as harmless as the insects. There are sins that have teeth, and there are sins that have children with teeth.

In great dwellings there are many apartments. There are long and dusky halls. There are closets and storing-rooms that are not often visited. There are spare-rooms, atties, lumber-rooms. While the faithful housekeeper watches in the living-rooms against dirt and insect foes, the insidious enemy has silently retreated to these remoter camps, where broom and brush seldom come. There they rear their undisturbed families. They nest in corners. They brood in old garments. They make cities of refuge out of rolls of cloth. These children of the moth wake to raven and fatten upon juiceless thread. Dust and sweepings are good enough for their ordinary food, but woolen is a high living, while feathers and fur are a banquet and a royal luxury to them. The old man

dozes below, and dreams his battles over again, while the silent moth up stairs is eating his feathers, piercing his hat, and wasting the threads of his uniform. So, while men doze and dream, their honors fade away, and their glory is consumed. And when, on some anniversary day, the garments are brought forth, the feathers fall to powder, the coat is cut with a sharper tool than the sword, and the whole suit is perished forever. Sharp is the needle, but sharper the invisible tooth of the moth, and no needle-skill can repair its cunning desolations.

So it comes to pass, often, that enemies individually weak are more dangerous on that account. We can watch against a thief—scarcely against the miller. We suspect the sounding elements. Sun and air are our friends against mould and must. But these soft-winged motes, that hover between daylight and dark, that bring forth unseen, that hide by the process of eating, and build burrows by the very masonry of their teeth—these are most fatal to our hidden possessions. How many carpets are cut and scissored that still look fair to the eye, and reveal no mischief! How many apparelings of reserved rooms hang in all their folds with seeming soundness that need only to be shaken to show all the mischief done!

Alas! the waste is revealed only when no help can avail. The muffs and tippets come forth in November, but they are fleeced and shorn, and they can be mended no more. The coarse raiment that was to have turned the frosty wind is creased, and pierced, and cut, and destroyed. Too late you learn that your garments are moth-eaten.

Against all these enemies there are endless nostrums tried —pungent odors, caustic powders, incasing linen; but, after all, vigilance, light, and continuous using are the truest remedies. Moths do not eat things in use. They are pests of silence and darkness. Things of day and things of life are guarded by the powers of activity. And this is true of moral moths as well, and more eminently.

Could there, then, have been selected a figure more pertinent, more striking in its analogies, than this? Could any thing more clearly show to us the power of the sins of neglect? of the sins of indolence and of carelessness? of sins of a soft and gentle presence, that in themselves are not very harmful, but that are the breeders of others that are? of the silent mischiefs of the unused faculties or rooms of the soul, that are not ventilated, nor searched with the broom and the brush? Men do well to watch and fight against obvious and sounding sins. They are numerous. They exist on every hand. They are dangerous. They are armed and are desperate. They swarm the ways of life. Not one vice, not one crime, not one temptation, not one sin of which the Word of God warns us, is to be lightly esteemed. They are to be watched, and in armor, too; we are to be proof against them.

But these are not our only dangers. Tens of thousands of men perish, not by the lion-like stroke of temptation, but by the insidious bite of the hidden serpent; not with roar and strength, but with subtle poison. More men are moth-eaten than lion-eaten in this life; and it behooves us in time to give heed to these dangers of invisible and insidious little enemies.

The real strength of man is in his character. Popular estimate makes it consist in his circumstances. A man's strength is measured by the number of his friends, by his wealth, by his social position; and his influence is in proportion to his reputation in the world's esteem. But, in truth, a man is strong only in his manhood. How much there is in a man you must ascertain by measuring his character; for one may be the possessor of houses and lands, of stocks and bonds, of gold and silver, of ingots and chests filled and refilled therewith; one's possessions may be vast, and, after all, the wealth may have a fool for an owner. A man is not strong by what he has, but by what he *is;* and in measuring what a man is, we are to measure his character.

Now character is not a massive unit; it is a fabric, rather.

It is an artificial whole made up by the interply of ten thousand threads. Every faculty is a spinner, spinning every day its threads, and almost every day threads of a different color. Myriads and myriads of webbed products proceed from the many active faculties of the human soul, and character is made up by the weaving together of all these innumerable threads of daily life. Its strength is not merely in the strength of some simple unit, but in the strength of numerous elements.

There are crimes that, like frost on flowers, in one single night accomplish their work of destruction. There are vices that, like freshets, sweep every thing before them. Men may be destroyed in character and reputation utterly, and suddenly. But there are other instruments of destruction besides these. We do well to mark them, and to watch against them; but we also do well to remember that a man may be preserved from crimes and from great vices, and yet have his character moth-eaten. We do well to remember that a little tooth, which is almost too small for the microscope, may nevertheless be large enough to cut one thread, and another thread, and another thread; and when you have begun to cut threads, you have begun to make holes; and when you have begun to make holes, the destruction of the garment is at hand; and a character that is moth-eaten, that has begun to be pierced by petty sins and vices, is weakened, and is being prepared for destruction.

I therefore, in the spirit of the text, bid you beware, search, and see whether your garments are moth-eaten. We are told in the Apocalypse to take care of our garments, that no man may take them from us. Beware lest men steal your garments; beware lest the elements consume them; but, most of all, beware lest they become moth-eaten. Watch against little sins and little faults.

First, aside from great vices and crimes, there are the moths of indolence. Indolence may be supposed to be morally wrong; but it is thought to be wrong rather in a neg-

ative way than otherwise. No, no! The mischief of water is not that it does not run, but that, not running, it corrupts, and, corrupting, breeds poisonous miasma, so that they who live in the neighborhood inhale disease at every breath. The mischief of indolence is not that it neglects the use of powers and the improvement of the opportunities of life, but that it breeds morbid conditions in every part of the soul. An indolent man is like an unoccupied dwelling. Scoundrels sometimes burrow in it. Thieves and evil characters make it their haunt; or, if they do not, it is full of vermin. A house that is used does not breed moths half as fast as a house that, having the beginnings of them, stands empty. Woe be to them who take an old house, and carry their goods into it! A lazy man is an old house full of moths in every part.

And yet there are very many who seem to suppose that the very end in life to be chiefly sought is a blissful indolence. They make this fool's paradise the aim of their ambition, and say within themselves, "I will give my youth and my earlier manhood to indefatigable enterprise, that in my later years I may retire." Retire? When the worms retire they have something worth retiring on. They have at least a silk cocoon to live in while passing through their dormant state. But for a man to retire with nothing but indolence, with no higher end of life than self-indulgence, ease, and leisure, is ignominious. For a man in the midst of health and strength to abandon the active pursuits of life, and enter upon a round of uselessness, is to adopt a course that is sin-breeding, moth-eating. The very conditions of manhood, honor, integrity, and piety, require that every man not only should make his life ceaselessly active, but should jealously and vigilantly scrutinize every part of himself, to see that no hall, no chamber, no upper room, no attic, no basement, no part of his whole soul-house is unventilated, unswept, and uncared for. Look out for indolence even in little things. There is health in activity, but there is disease in indolence.

There are moths also in things unsuspected. All men agree that a glutton and a drunkard are opprobrious and ignominious. All men join in decrying them and inveighing against them; and we are perhaps not in danger of becoming drunkards and gluttons. But there are excesses from overeating on this side of gluttony, and excesses from overdrinking this side of drunkenness. There are moths of appetite. There are many men who eat beyond the necessities of nature. They obscure their minds. You must take your choice between your brain and your stomach. If you fill the one, you must relieve the other. If you will work your head, you must carry temperance into your diet. Full-feeding and full-thinking never go hand in hand. There are hundreds of men, who, being of a vigorous physical frame, and of an active appetite, unconsciously eat to repletion, and then, through feverishness, and indigestions, and the disturbed functions of their whole system, they labor through the day to discharge their duties, toiling, fretting, and troubled, and do not know that the cause of the mischief is simply an excess in eating. There are many men who, by this simple act of taking too much food, twice or thrice a day repeated, keep all their feelings upon an edge, so that they are quick and irritable, or stupid and slow. There are many persons who, by mere overeating, take from sleep its refreshment, and from their waking hours their peace, by the gnawing of the worm of appetite.

This is a little thing. Your physician does not say much about it. Your parents hardly ever speak of it. It is a thing for every man to consider for himself. But it is a serious fact that two thirds of the men who live a sedentary life impair their strength by the simple act of injudicious feeding—overeating.

And that which is true of food is still more true of stimuli: not alone of spirituous liquors, with regard to which you are warned abundantly, but also of domestic stimuli. The world is full of such great sins that it seems as though a minister might find better business than talking about such petty evils.

There are some people who think, or seem to think, that in the pulpit a man ought to preach about great and glaring vices only, and that for a minister to speak of tea, and coffee, and tobacco is a very small business. I know it is a very small business; and I never should trouble you with one word on this subject if it were not for the fact that these little moths cut the very threads of health and life. I know a great many young men who will be good for nothing. What is the matter? They are moth-eaten. The eagle will not eat them. They are not in danger of buzzards or serpents. Still less are they in danger of lions. They will not die from an ass's kick. They will be eaten of worms, and by moths at that—little insignificant faults, so small that they are ashamed of a minister that will spend his time and breath in talking about them.

If there was but one, or if there were many but once, it would be different; but the habit of tampering with your nerves is one that can not be indulged in with impunity. The nerve is the seat of life itself—soul-life. It is in the nerve and brain that man is, if any where; and he that touches these, touches home to the very quick of himself. It is the peculiar nature of every kind of stimulus to reach beyond the muscle, and affect the very centre of sentiment and emotive existence. And the habit of using narcotics or stimuli of any kind is a habit of moth-eating.

I do not mean to be understood as saying that every man who employs tobacco is moth-eaten; that every man who indulges himself moderately in the use of tea and coffee is injured thereby. I do not mean to go so far as to say that every man who uses, unfrequently and in small quantities, wines and liquors, is himself physically injured by them. But I do mean to say, comprehensively—and you know it is true—that in this sphere lie a multitude of mischiefs and of temptations, each of which is minute, but the sum of which is exceedingly dangerous. And it is a part of my business, as a pastor and teacher, to warn you of the swarm of silent-winged,

apparently harmless, and yet deadly mischiefs, that gnaw and consume men in these regards.

There are two mischiefs of the mouth. One is the mischief of the tongue—that untamable wild beast against which we are warned. A terrible thing it is. That is the outward mischief of the mouth. But there is this other one of eating and drinking. Whichever way the tide goes, it may carry life or death. And there are innumerable mischiefs of the mouth which men should be put on their guard against, since that is the great feeding-part of the soul.

The carriage of our affections also develops a class of tendencies which are fitly included in this subject. There are many men who never give way to wrath on a great and sounding scale. It is wholesome to be mad thoroughly. It does a man good to subsoil him by stirring him up down to the bottom. A man that does not know how to be angry, does not know how to be good. A man that does not know how to be shaken to his heart's core with indignation over things evil, is either a fungus or a wicked man. "Abhor that which is evil" is the divine command, just as much as "Cleave to that which is good." High and gusty passions that sweep through the soul are sometimes like fierce summer storms that cleanse the air, and give the earth refreshment by strong winds and down-pelting rains. Men are better for knowing how to be angry, provided the sun does not go down on their wrath, and provided it is justified by the occasions of it. If a man hates meanness and dishonor, he may be angry at them; if it is men's sins, and not their faults, not their foibles, not their unintentional offenses, not their piques of his pride and vanity that make him angry. Soul-destroying wickednesses among men—these should excite your anger. I would that men were fretful less and angry more. For it is these little petty moths of perpetual fretfulness, moroseness, sourness; these little fribbles of temper that cut the thread of life—it is these that destroy men, inside and out. Nothing is nobler than the beauty of that

face on which fair dispositions and generous sentiments blossom. The face is the garden of the soul. What you raise within, you show without. And there is nothing that shows so quick, so homely, and so irreparably in the countenance, as a sour temper, and petty, frivolous, irritable, moth-eating dispositions. Beware of them. The garment of the soul is eaten by them.

We read about some of the passions of which we see traces, but of the nature, and progress, and power of which we scarcely ever form an adequate conception, either in others or in ourselves. Some of them are such as these: greediness, envy, jealousy. Youth is seldom afflicted with them. They are like asters and the golden-rod in blossoming late. They are unlike them in being homely, early or late. There are some faults that are spring-faults, and that are found in children, such as lying, deceit, and equivocation. These are the instruments of conscious helplessness. The child has not courage to lift itself up against authority, and it leaks where it dare not boil over. For faults like these, old age gives us correctives. But there are some faults which never come in early youth, which are of later growth. Among these is greediness of gain. Children may be greedy for the mouth, but they are seldom greedy for property, for honor, or for position. A desire for these things comes little by little. Very few men set out in life intending to be greedy. This disposition grows silently and gradually, so that one can scarcely distinguish the progress of it from year to year.

The same is true of envying and jealousy, that, with health and prosperity, scarcely show themselves, but that, with a deranged physical system, and with trouble, are like weeds that spring up suddenly and of their own accord. Envies and jealousies, that are but small mischiefs at first, and that often take on the form of wit, and serve simply as the salt with which to season social life, are apt, with waning health and declining years, to assume a more malignant form, with a cut-

ting tendency which grows more and more sharp as age advances. These things, which at first are minor faults, become, after a little time, corruptions of the mind, that score it and threaten its destruction. Under such circumstances the soul is moth-eaten. And there is a great deal more of jealousy, a great deal more of envy, and a great deal more of greediness among men than any of us suspect. They are latent. They lurk. They lie concealed.

There is a sphere in men's lives into which they are accustomed to sweep a whole multitude of petty faults without judging them, without condemning them, and without attempting to correct them. There is a realm of moral moths for almost all of us. We all hold ourselves accountable for major morals, but there is a realm of minor morals where we scarcely suppose ethics to enter. There are thousands and thousands of little untruths that hum, and buzz, and sting in society, which are too small to be brushed or driven away. They are in the looks; they are in the inflections and tones of the voice; they are in the actions; they are in reflections rather than in direct images that are presented. They are methods of producing impressions that are false, though every means by which they are produced is strictly true. There is a way of serving that which is wrong while you are prepared to show that every thing that you say or do is right. There are little unfairnesses between man and man, and companion and companion, that are said to be minor matters, and that are small things; there are little unjust judgments and detractions; there are slight indulgences of the appetites; there are petty violations of conscience; there are ten thousand of these plays of the passions in men which are called foibles or weaknesses, but which eat like moths. They take away the temper; they take away magnanimity and generosity; they take from the soul its enamel and its polish. Men palliate and excuse them; but that has nothing to do with their natural effect upon us. They waste and destroy us, and that, too, in the soul's silent and hidden parts.

The same may be said of other destroyers. The world is full of things that are dangerous and that are overt, and moths are not the only destroyers. They are the type of a whole class of destroyers; but none are more dangerous than they. The waves that beat against the ship are not so dangerous to it as plank-boring worms. Head-winds do not drag ships back any more than the seeds and shells that collect upon their bottoms. Posts driven into the water seem fair and strong while being honey-combed by the worm that eats. In silince and secrecy treasures are thus being consumed.

So it is with man the world over. While he has his obvious and open enemies, he has his enemies under water, unseen, silent, excoriating, and piercing.

I beg of you, therefore, when you lay out the paths of duty, and make an inventory of things to be examined, to be weighed, and to be tested, not only carefully to enumerate all obvious dangers, but to remember when the thief is guarded against, when the roof is proof against the elements, when the walls and windows are sufficient to keep out the wind and the rain, and when the hand of greed and of ruthless destruction are fortified against, there is still lurking in the house a victorious insect — the destroying moth — the ravages of which only ceaseless care and vigilance can prevent. And as it is with the dwelling outside, so, more, it is with the dwelling of the soul. Beware of robber passions, of intrusive temptations, of those sympathetic sins which draw men by their better affections to their worst ends. Beware of the wind, of the rain, of the sea, of savage beasts, and of summer and winter in the soul. Beware also of moths, of foibles, of faults, of little, mean, sharp-toothed sins, that cut, and eat, and destroy the garment. And when God shall bring us to judgment, may he grant that we be not as are summer-kept garments which were hung in supposed safety and in fancied security, waiting for the coming of the winter, to protect our limbs from the severity of the weather, but which,

when the housewife brings them out, to her horror fall to the ground as beggar's trash, unfit to be used, ruined, and full of the seeds of mischief, and good for nothing but to be gathered up and given to the flames. Many a man keeps the fair proportions of manhood in life, and seems to be without crime, or vice, or great fault, who is so pierced, and channeled, and granulated, and eaten by petty faults, that when he is lifted up in the eternal world, like a garment that is moth-eaten, he will fall to pieces and be fit only for eternal burning. "Your garments are moth-eaten." There is in that a declaration as terrible as in that other sentence which God shall pronounce upon those who reject him, and with effrontery of wickedness array themselves on the side of his open enemies. May God keep us from secret sins!

XVI.

Spring-time in Nature and in Experience.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, March 2d, 1862.

Spring-time in Nature and in Experience.

"For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth: the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."—Solomon's Song, ii., 11–13.

Almost all of every degree of sensibility are conscious of receiving some influence from nature at two periods of the year—autumn and spring. The shortening of the days is the first token that acts seriously upon the mind. The early morning hour, that used to be full of sun, at length comes; but no sun is in it: he is not yet risen. The cars that brought you in June from the city to the distant station left you yet a full half-hour of evening sunshine; but now in September, at the same hour, the sun has gone down, and the very twilight is fading out. The days are going; and every day, with a gentle sigh, we say, "The days are shortening; the year is closing!" The days lose at both ends: they are clipped in the morning, and sheared in the evening. Something of exhilaration goes with them. The full and overflowing day, that was like a wine-cup put to the lips, is gone, and smaller ones are coming. If days are goblets sent to us with the water of life, with the wine of light and warmth, then they are no longer those great festal beakers, but less of rim, of depth, of contents, till that which in July filled the double hand, in November is like a tapering glass held with two fingers. And this sense of departure is so indissolubly associated with the decrease of human life, the passing away of our years,

the shortening of our days, the ending of pleasures and ambitions, that no one can help feeling a certain sadness, though it be a sweet sadness; a certain gladness, though it be a solemn gladness.

Then, too, along with these changes in the heavens are others upon the earth. The first color of red in the maples upon some single branch, set like a lamp in the whole topful of green leaves, is the earliest hint of autumn; and we parry the thought. We say, "Ah! it is only a sickly limb, prematurely ripe: it is not autumn yet." So, in consumptions, men find reasons for the hectic blush; but death is under it. Soon come the crimsons and scarlets of the forest edges—the sumach, the vines. We find no more flowers where never a day refused us one all summer long. The asters flourish—the asters, that are fitly called star-flowers, not only from their rayed disk, but because, when the day is done, stars redeem the night from utter darkness; and asters are the latest flowers of autumn, and are bright though the golden-rod is dim, and trees are sear, and russet leaves are rustling around their stems. They blossom bravely on till the very frost comes.

And so, as fires go out, the blaze growing less, the great sticks turning to coals, the coals to ashes and embers, and these, little by little, dying silently away, until only sparks are left, which one by one fly up or become extinguished, so is it with the summer, that blazes in August, that turns to coals all ruddy in September and October which pale and hide themselves in November, and whose last sparks are quenched in December.

The spirit goes with the seasons. Our thoughts may not be expressly busy with all these signs in the heaven and on the earth, but we sigh oftener; we sit silent more frequently; our walks are shortened; we remember the absent; we muse upon the worth of life, upon its course and issues. We are not sombre exactly, but we are sweetly sad.

There is something even more touching than this: it is the flight of birds. All summer they have filled the woods.

They sing from the trees. They rise from thickets and weed-muffled fences as in our wanderings we scale them. They sing in the air. They wake us with their matins. They chant vespers with glorious discordance of sweet medley. They flit across the lawn, rise and fall on the swinging twig, or rock to the wind on their aerial grass-perch.

But after August they become mute, and in October days they begin to recede from the dwellings. No more twittering wrens; no more circling swallows; no more grotesque bobolinks; no more meadow-larks, singing as if they were heart-broken. They begin now to come in troops in the distant fields. At sunset the pasture is full of flocks, hundreds and thousands of birds! At morning they are gone. And every day brings its feathery caravan. Every day they pass on. Long flocks of fowl silently move far up against the sky, and always going away from the north. At evening the weary string of water-fowls, flying low, and wistful of some pond for rest and food, fill the air with hoarse trumpeting and clangor. They are going—the last are going. Winter is behind them; summer is before them; we are left. The season is bereft. Light is short; darkness is long. Flowers are sunken to rest. The birds have flown away. Winter, *winter*, WINTER is upon the earth!

At last come the December days. The shortest is reached. Then a few days stand alike. Then the solar blaze creeps forward a minute in the evening; a little more; again more, till half hours swing round the horizon—till hours are strung upon the days—till noons grow warm—till storms are full of melted snow—till the earth comes back—till ponds unlock themselves. The forests grow purple-twigged; the great winds sigh and rage. March blusters and smiles by turns—a giant that now is cross, and now kind. The calves begin to come; lambs bleat; the warm hills are plowed. At last the nights are without frost.

At length we wake, some unexpected morning, and the bluebird's call is in the tree. We throw up the sash. The

sun lies flush on all the landscape. There is a smell of soil and leaf in the air. The poplar buds are fragrant as balm. The air is warm and moist. The birds are surely here; they answer each other—the sparrow, the bluebird, the robin, and afar off, on the edges of the swamp, the harsh twanging notes of the blackbird. It is spring! It is the time of the singing of birds. No one forgets the wild thrill of the heart at the first sound of birds in spring.

Oh! with what a sense of emancipation do we hear the birds sing again. God sends his choirs to sing victory over night and death for us. Winter, that buried all, is herself put away. Death is swallowed up in victory, and nature chants the requiem of the past and the joy of the future. Now days shall grow longer and warmer. Now industry shall move more freely. Now flowers shall come up; seed shall be sown; doors and windows shall stand open all day long. Around about the barn the hens shall cackle. Children shall shout. Spring has come, and all things rejoice at their release. No more locking ice; no more inhospitable snow; no more blight of cold. All is promise. Men go forth with seed, and roots, and scions. The orchard, and garden, and field are full of life.

"The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

Is this, now, a mere ornamental passage of Scripture? Scripture has no passages that are mere ornaments. Unlike all other literature, Scripture never merely decorates. If there is a figure, it is always for some errand of moral meaning. There is no description for description's sake. There is no poetry for mere æsthetical pleasure. There is always profit withal.

Nature, then, teaches that to every season of trouble and overthrow there comes resurrection. In the deepest January of the year there is a nerve that runs forward to June. Life is never extinguished. That which seems to be death reaches forward and touches that which is vital.

The year breaks cloudily, with many slips and many retrocessions. To-day open, to-morrow shut. Birds too early tempted are driven away by bleak winds. And yet spring, once come upon the earth, is never banished again until it has reaped a victory. All checks, and haltings, and struggles, and storms can not alter the inevitable year. So is it in human affairs. There are cold and dark December days. But be patient; they too have a June waiting for them. To the earlier openings which come among men in darkness and trouble, there are retrocessions, there are promises suddenly blighted; but every spring has its March, and March never killed a spring. Men that have early hopes beginning may have them checked and driven back; but this is not a sign that summer has not come to them, or begun to come. The time of the singing of birds is the time of hope.

The year lies open before us. We open the furrow. We hide therein our seed. We sow in hope, with eager industry, and rejoice beforehand. Our seed is not sprouted, our flowers are not blossomed, our fruits are not ripe, and yet by faith we rejoice in them, foreseeing the future. If we let the seed-time go past, we lose the year. And so it is in human life. In the state, in the Church, in the household, and in the individual heart, there is a time for the sowing of seed. We sow amid hopes and expectations. The result is not yet. We wait for it, and are sure that it will come.

But we may make a more full and particular moral application of the change of seasons. Nations have their autumn, their leaf-falling, their winter, and their spring. So do communities, churches, families, individuals.

I. Nations seem to have their periods like the year. Neither in civilization nor in Christian elements do they seem to mount up with a steady growth. They move, rather, as it were, in spirals. They often return as if falling back, and yet their progress, on the whole, is onward. There are times of struggle, of darkness, and of disaster in the history of every nation. And we have had our hours in this nation,

young as we are, of apathy, of winter. But, God be thanked, though it be this blowing, blustering March of our affairs, the winter has gone, the spring has come, and the sound of birds is in the air. Summer is not yet. Now is a time for sowing seeds; now is a time of expectation. The past—let it not be forgotten; but let us not take our lessons of joy from that. The autumn is ended, the winter is gone, the spring is come, and virtue, religion, justice, liberty, truth, and the freedom that truth gives to its children, are ours.

Tell me where the wheat is, farmer! You will point to the side-hill where it lies covered with snow, and say, "My harvest is there." No yellow stems are to be seen rocking in the wind. Nothing is visible of the grain but the blades just springing from the earth. And yet the farmer says, "My harvest is there; and when the summer shall have brought it forth and ripened it, I will gather it, and it will be mine in the granary and in the hand." And if you say to me, "Where are your fair days of liberty and hope?" I point to the side-hills. Though they are yet clasped in ice, or covered with snow, I have heard the sound of the trumpet; and that is God's bird that sings in the air to this nation. I have heard the rushing sounds of battle.* March winds are they that God blows across the continent. Though the earth is still unlocked, and the edges of winter are so near that we feel chilled, yet the time of the singing of birds has come to this land, and we shall never again go so far back into win-

* This sermon was preached in the midst of the civil war. The disastrous battle of Bull Run had been followed by a long inactivity in the East, not yet broken in upon by the advance on Yorktown. General Fremont had been called back from Springfield, and lower Missouri had not yet been redeemed by the battle of Pea Ridge. Commodore Foote had not yet passed Island No. 10, the northern gate of the Mississippi; and New Orleans had not yet surrendered to Commodore Farragut. On the other hand, the capture of Forts Donelson and Henry in the West, and the occupation of Roanoke and Newbern in the East, had given the loyal heart the first real gleams of light and inspiration of hope since the gloom which the defeat at Bull Run had cast over the nation.

ter and death as we have been. Our course is onward, now, toward summer, and every month will grow warmer and warmer.

II. Deep convulsions and embarrassments of all industrial pursuits are wont to go along with national trials. So it has been with us. As though it were not enough that our government should be almost paralyzed, and that so many hundreds of thousands of our most able-bodied men should be sent to the tented field, all home industries have suffered. Nor is it merely that the harbors are choked, as it were, the loom has ceased to clank, and the shop has become silent. Human life itself is connected with all industrial pursuits; that which disturbs the loom disturbs the cradle; that which disturbs the counting-room disturbs the parlor; that which disturbs business disturbs the family. All the North and South have felt the burden, the grief, the trouble, the anxiety, the difficulty, which has come from the universal derangement of commercial affairs consequent upon war, rebellion, and revolution. Nevertheless, I stand upon the second day of spring. This is the second of March. All day yesterday I walked conqueror. I said to myself, "It is the first day of spring;" and I stood triumphing over the past, and rejoicing in the coming future. And to-day is the second day of spring. I send words of cheer to our beloved land. I send words of cheer to those that are enduring hardships on the field of battle, and to those that at home are struggling with embarrassments and difficulties. To all those whose wheels of enterprise are blocked; to all those whose past growths are withering; to all whose roots are locked in the icy soil; to all whose leaves are touched by the frost of disappointment—to them I say, The winter is past; the time of the singing of birds has come. Wait a little; some more snows may fall, and there may be some more frosts; but the time of the singing of birds has come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in your affairs.

III. There are the same experiences in families as in na-

tions and industrial communities. There are some families that seem compelled to go to the promised land, as the Israelites did, through a desert. There are many that, having experienced long years of toil and suffering, come out only at last. But there are many that, having been prospered and happy, lapse into a state of want and trouble. The streams that swelled with prosperity, swell no more; the birds that sang of prosperity, sing no more. They come from wealth and comfort into distress and poverty.

It is hard to go down into the winter of trouble. It is hard to find one's self beset with all the difficulties that oftentimes attend the household. But when a family has through trouble and affliction found the way to God; when through trials and sufferings a family has come to the knowledge of an ever-present Savior, who is afflicted in all our afflictions, who bears our sins, and who carries our sorrows, to that family, though it be in its darkest January days, has come the time of the singing of birds. It is not so much matter that you should be lifted out of your want, as that you should have peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Are there not some households upon whose walls first fell the pale light of spring, and then arose the Sun of Righteousness in their deep distress? Are there not some here that can say this morning, "The time of the singing of birds is come to us?"

There are times of great sickness, bereavement, and sorrow that befall our families. There are days that, though they are very short and mid-winter days, are, oh! how long; for, as a short distance is long to one that carries a heavy burden, so days that are sorrow-clad, and that measure the minutes by the tick and fall of tears, are long days, though they are short ones. How many wade the sea of troubles. How many that seek to ford the stream of grief are unable to go from bank to bank, and are caught when but half way across, and carried down; and you can not ford a stream by going lengthwise in it. How many seem to be going down in sickness; and yet, either the sickness departs, or the spirit de-

parts. How many are borne down by bereavements; and yet consolations come, or the prayer asking that the trouble may be removed is answered by the voice that says, "Let it abide, that my grace may be sufficient for you." There is great joy of prosperity, of love, of victory; but there is a joy that belongs to the experience of suffering and sorrow which is more divine and exquisite than any joy the heart ever knows outside of trouble. When a soul is afflicted till it is driven into the very pavilion of God; till Christ, as it were, wraps his arms about it, and says, Rest here till the storm be overpast, that soul experiences an exquisiteness of joy which only those who have felt it can understand.

There are times of anguish in those nameless sorrows which belong to the sacredness of households. The best parts of the history of households are never written. What is it to us that kings go out with armies, and trample each other under foot, and produce great revolutions on the surface of the earth? What is it that all these external and more obvious events are occurring in the world? The real life is, after all, going on behind these things. You see a few leaves, but all those myriad drops of vital sap that, beginning with the root, work up through the tree, and minister to those leaves, are never seen. The sap of life is the invisible life of the household. The nameless experiences of the hearts of parents and children, which have no expression, these are the sap of life.

How many men there are prospered outwardly; whose account at the bank is ample; whose credit is abundant; who are envied by all that know them; and who are congratulated on every hand upon their supposed good fortune, but who say of the little boy that springs ragged and buoyant into their path, "All I have in the world I would give if I could be as merry as that little child!" How many men there are that have honor such that thousands would be willing to give life itself if they might obtain it, but who have behind that a son, a daughter, or a companion that is a

source of unutterable grief! It is an old saying that every house has its skeleton. You may sit in the portico and never suspect it. You may go through the hall and never suspect it. You may enter the parlor of festivity, and it is not there. You may go into the sitting-room, and it is not there. You may trace it to the room where it is, and then not see it. But if, at last, you touch some hidden spring in the wainscoting, all unsuspected, open flies a door, and there is some ghastly sorrow or trouble uphung. Every household has its skeleton. Blessed be God that there is such a household. What would become of this world if our griefs and sorrows were hung, as in some ages and countries criminals have been, at the corners of the streets, so that they could be seen by every passer-by? The family, like old Noah's ark, carries over the heart from the old world to the new, while guilt, and shame, and disgrace sink under the flood and are drowned.

But are there no spring-like days that come upon the winter of troubles in the household? Is it all blast, all blight, all burying? Is there nothing but pale, white, enwrapping snow? Are there no birds that ever fly athwart the sky of the bereaved family? Is there an utter absence of every thing like comfort and cheer? Blessed be God, even though trouble may abide, joy comes too.

I sometimes think that it is in the household as it is in those matchless Miltonic symphonies of Beethoven, or of Weber's overture to Der Freischutz. There seems to be the discord, the wail, the fierce fight, the struggle of spirits that come together and blend in terrific clash and controversy; and yet some exquisite strain of melody begins here, and flashes out there again, and grows louder and louder, till at last it seems to predominate over all the rush of other sounds, and they become an undertone of harmonious base, while high above them, filling the air with ecstasy and joy, rises the descant and song of triumph. And above the wail of sorrow and trouble in many a household rises a song

of rejoicing. Aspirations, and longings, and yearnings, and prayers, and anxiety, and discontent throng together and mingle in harsh discord; but by-and-by hope, faith, gleams of expectation, take possession of the soul, and at last, ransomed, it begins, with victory, to rise above all these struggles, and its very sorrows roll beneath it as only a kind of foundation thunder on which to lift up its notes of joy and triumph.

IV. The same is eminently true of individuals. There are those who have broken away from the thralls of life. There are some here (excuse me if I am personal) who were born to better things than they have seen; to truer companions than they have found; to holier thoughts, higher purposes, and nobler aspirations than they have had. They have been caught; been snared; been swept part way down—almost quite down, perhaps. But a brighter day has begun to dawn for them. A loftier ambition has inspired them. They have begun to feel that the evil influences that have surrounded them and thralled them are withdrawing from them. They have formed worthier purposes. They have entered upon a more honorable life. The winter has gone from their soul. Some rude storms may yet beat upon them, but a new spring has come to them; a new light has dawned upon them; a new summer is just before them; a new hope is theirs.

There is the exclamation of the Psalmist, "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers." There are those who have been going through transitions of life in which great ambitions, of pride, of vanity, of love, of various descriptions, have been overthrown. They know not why things have gone against them. If you were to hear some men's experience, you would think that they grow as the white pine grows, with straight grain, and easily split—for I notice that all that grow easy split easy. But there are some that grow as the mahogany grows, with veneering knots, and all quirls and contortions of grain. That is the best timber of the forest which has the most knots. Every body seeks it, because, being hard to grow, it is hard to wear

out. And when knots have been sawn and polished, how beautiful they are!

There are many who are content to grow straight like weeds on a dunghill; but there are many others who want to be stalwart and strong like the monarchs of the forest; and yet, when God sends winds of adversity to sing a lullaby in their branches, they do not like to grow in that way. They dread the culture that is really giving toughness to their soul, strength to its fibre. But the moment a man submits to the discipline and affliction that he is called to pass through in the providence of God, that moment he sees that the way against which his pride and vanity have rebelled is the right way. Nine parts out of ten of your griefs are cured the moment you accept with cheerfulness the lot to which God has appointed you in this life. Nine hundred and ninety-nine parts out of a thousand of human trouble are only rebellion; and the moment a soul says, "Lord, thy will be done," that moment its trouble is over, and the time of the singing of birds has come. There will still be wind in the pine and winter in the field, but when birds have once sung they will sing again.

There are those who have fought the fight of great trouble in sickness. Not all the soldiers of God are in the battle-field. There are those there who are strong-backed, whose muscles are like brawn, whose bones are like flint, and whose faces, for zeal, are like the face of January, and for enthusiasm are like the face of July. But these are not God's only soldiers, nor his strongest soldiers. Some of God's most heroic soldiers are the bedridden. Look at that sweet child of eighteen, full of aspiration and hope, to whom has been denied, not loving father, not loving mother, not sisters and more than anxious brothers, but health. She has made a weary fight for one year, for two years, for three years, and at last she says, "If God has planted me to grow as a night-shade here; if I am to be a flower in the forest, that knows no sun; if it is here that God wants me to show patience and

zeal, then I am content with my lot; I accept it, and I will ask and expect nothing more. Let this be my sphere of duty, and let my life be spent on the bed, the couch, the cot, if God wishes it. If sickness be God's will, even so. His will be done, not mine." The time of the singing of birds has come to such a heart. To such a heart spring has come, and summer is not far off. Such I have seen.

V. There are applications innumerable to spiritual conditions. There are persons in this church who have seen the days of summer. Many of you, three or four years ago, you recollect, stood here, on this anniversary, and yielded up your vows and covenants, and plighted your troth to God. The spectacle was touching and sublime. You have known a truce and a vacation. You have had your summer. Many of you have cast your leaves. You have seen November, and gone wading through the cold winter of backsliding. But March has come round to you. A little bird began to sing right in your family. Before you thought of such a thing, you heard the singing of birds. It was your daughter that sang; or, it was the little child of your next-door neighbor. There is beginning to be a warmth in your heart. You are beginning to think of your declining days. You are beginning to yearn for the old love. You are beginning to say, "Is it not time for the winter to be gone, and for the spring to have come in my heart?" The time, oh! backsliding Christian; oh! wandering professor of religion; oh! child of God, beloved of him, and yet forgetful of your Father and your Savior—the time of the singing of birds has come to you. Rise up and rejoice!

And as it is to individuals in the Church, so is it to the whole Church itself; so is it to us. Although, as a church, we have been having many blessings, and have not been without witnesses of his Spirit, yet, owing partly to our sympathy with human affairs, and with the affairs of our nation and our time, and partly to other causes, as regards the peculiar blessings of the sanctuary—the awakening and the con-

version of sinners—we have come to autumn and to winter; and behold! word comes from our Sabbath-school, and from many families that are related to us, that the time of the singing of birds has come. Birds and children—God be blessed for them. How much I thank God that he did not let men come into the world as soldiers go into the battle-field, full grown, but that they come in children. Give me children in the house. Give me children in the school. Give me children in the street. If I am sick, let me hear their voices through the open window. The sweetest birds that ever sang in the air are these birds of the house, and school, and street—children. And there are many that have just begun to sing in the air. Some are here to-day that have just flown up into the branches of the tree of life. There may they find protection from heat and storm, and food for their everlasting want.

And some are singing outside yet. In the Sabbath-school there is a singing of birds. In this church, God be thanked, birds are singing. Oh! father, could God roll such a burden off your heart as to let you know that your children are truly converted to Christ? When a Christian man's child is converted, he says to himself, "I have a policy for that child; that child is insured." You have done up your work of life; it is completed when you can put your children into the bosom of the Savior.

Covenant-believing parents, are your children among those who are yearning for Jesus Christ, and hoping and singing? Have you done any thing? Have you thought? Have you prayed? Have you asked before the open heart of God, that sounds out louder than the ocean in your presence, saying, "Whatever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive?" Have you asked that your children might be gathered into the kingdom of Christ?

There are many classes and many schools that are very happy now. I congratulate you, dear teacher. You see of the travail of your soul, and are satisfied. Now you know

something of Jesus that you did not know before; for when word came to you of the conversion of such and such a one, what a thrill of joy did it give you, that God should bring your dear pupils to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus! How sweet was the ecstasy and gladness of your soul! Now take what you feel and transfer it to Christ, remembering that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance. This is the way Christ feels respecting us. Take that thought, and when you experience the feeling of joy and gladness, use it as an interpretation of your God and Father. Make more of him; for we grow in grace in proportion as we grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There are many families that are now strangely united. In times of flood, at the West, it sometimes happens that families are surprised. In the morning they rise up, and find their dwelling surrounded by water. I recollect an incident that occurred on the Miami Bottoms when the Ohio overflowed, and the country for four or five miles about was submerged. To one dwelling, in which the water had driven the family from the bottom of the house to the roof, which was then crumbling, boats came, and the father and mother, and two or three children, were taken off, and it was supposed that all were rescued; but after they had gone a little distance, it was found out that one of the children had been left behind. Great consternation and alarm was occasioned by the discovery, and a boat was instantly sent to secure the child. The house was already disjointing, and timbers from it were floating off; but the child was found, and taken into the boat. Thus the last child was saved. Then suddenly the flood swelled, and in a short time the fragments of the building were swept down.

Oh! what joy, what gladness is there in families whose last child is finally converted to Christ! The floods of temptation and sin swell and surge, and threaten the household,

and one is rescued from danger, and another, and at last the ark of life is sent to take the last child, and it is saved. Is it not time to bring in the whole of your household? Can you imagine any happiness greater than that of the parent who can say, "Christ has twice given me my children: once for this world, and once for the world to come. Now, happen what may, nothing can befall me or mine, whether poverty or riches, joy or sorrow. Pledges of immortality God has given me in my children?" Sing! sing! break forth into rejoicing! There are seldom places in this world for such triumphs as there is in such experiences—experiences of souls renewed and sins forgiven; in these victories of grace, and, above all, these victories of grace in the family, where God sanctifies the father's and the mother's heart, and brings in, one by one, the children.

But the prodigals, that seem sometimes sent away from hope; that seem sometimes sent down the broad way, almost to the lurid gate, that at last God might snatch them as brands from the burning, with amazing grace—the return of these is a source of unspeakable joy in the household that shall go sounding on to eternity.

VI. We are all of us going through life as a kind of winter. We are, as we go toward age, dropping our hair, and losing, one by one, our senses. We are drifting toward autumn. Then come the vacuous days of the winter of seeming uselessness — declines which men dread. How many hate age. This is the winter of human life, to be sure; but just beyond is the rising of that bright, immortal spring where the birds of heaven sing, and which, when it has once begun, shall never be followed by winter, and shall never be visited by storms. We are all of us drawing near to the sweet spring of resurrection. Some have gone. Methinks I hear, to-day, strange sounds. My mother, my brother, my children, and my friends many, have gone before; but their voices come back, and I hear them to-day. The time of the singing of birds is come. Our spring is not far away. Our summer is near. Let every

one look up, and, in the light and the glory of the eternal world, take cheer. With a holier faith and a truer consecration, let us to-day march on in our Christian life, believing that he that hath pledged his word will never leave us nor forsake us. Wherever you may be, whether in battle, in the hospitals, among enemies, or in business; whatever may befall you, whether you be wounded, or captive, or sick, or maligned and traduced, or tossed hither and thither, sweet spring is coming on, and the summer of heaven is just before you. Be patient to the end, and finally you shall be saved.

XVII

Three Eras in Life: God—Love—Grief;

As exemplified in the Experience of Jacob.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, February 25th, 1866.

Three Eras in Life: God—Love—Grief.

"And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee. And Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people: and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession. And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine: as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Beth-lehem."—Genesis, xlviii., 1–7.

How strange human life appears to us in these remote ages. Society, customs, occupations, in the earliest antiquity, seem scarcely recognizable. Patriarchs of that far-off day are clothed with the romance of a thousand years. As, when a village stands on a summer afternoon flooded with a golden haze, we see it through the dust and the vapor which rise from the industry of the village itself, so we look at these old men of a distant time through an atmosphere which the minds of millions of men has created. It seems irreverent, if not wicked, to dissolve this golden mist, and to lay bare literal realities.

Esau and Jacob were brothers. They could not have been better contrasted had their characters been merely dramatic. Esau, the eldest, was bold, abrupt, heedless, yet with much in his nature that was generous and lovable.

He united a kind of rashness, which produces the effect of wickedness, with qualities which still draw the heart toward him. He had no settled plan of life, no governing principle. He was a man of impulses—capable of generous ones, yet more habitually acting under others. He acted resolutely, but thoughtlessly, along the line of impulse. When his worse nature prevailed he seemed hateful and cruel, though when his better nature was touched he seemed far more noble than his brother Jacob.

Jacob was a man of deep nature, but his depth lay chiefly in his domestic affections. He was considerate, wise, and politic. Esau's feelings were first; his thoughtfulness was second. Jacob's reason was dominant. Nothing in him acted that he did not permit. He looked before him. He foresaw advantages, anticipated evils; secured the one, and avoided the other.

Now a character that is perfectly round and balanced is never so interesting in its details as one that is fitful. Not that landscape which is smoothest is the most taking to the eye, but the roughest and the rudest. And characters that are well knit together do not catch men's admiration as those do that have chasms, and falls, and cliffs—strong qualities. It is always easier to live with a round and well-balanced mind, but we admire the other sort, and make heroes of them. So it is that the young and inexperienced are perpetually tempted to make heroes of men that are not heroic and that are unfit to be imitated. And hence it has come to be a saying that the faults of strong men are the things that are the easiest copied.

Jacob's feelings were always under the control of his judgment. He indulged them or repressed them as seemed best. Such a nature seldom captivates. The imagination always loves a certain uncontrollable course of feeling. One loves to see a strong man regulated and good, but regulation ought not to stand in the place of great natural impulses in the right direction. We want the heart to think for the

head as well as the head for the heart. Where a man measures every step, limits every feeling, analyzes every motive, controls every impulse to the scruple, he may seem to us more nearly right, but neither magnanimous nor strong. We conceive of a nature to which principle is like the banks of rivers, fixed and definite; but within those banks one loves to see the waters rising with awful freshets, or moving in uncontrollable power, now wrinkled and swirled, and making headlong haste to overcome all hinderances, and now spreading wider, and growing calmer, and flowing deeper, as if victory had subdued all fret and anger.

(But a man whose banks have been laid for him, stone by stone, smooth and even, is a canal, whose waters are economically regulated, just enough for profitable use, and not a drop more. Every wave and swell is combed out, every wrinkle is smoothed, and every drop, seemingly, is walking down to the mill with a sense of its duty to turn the wheel around. Canals are very good, but men do not sing or make poems about canals.)

Esau was not a river, but a torrent, that, when rain fell on the mountains, roared down the ravines, but in summer was dry. Jacob was more than a canal. He was a river, but a stream that had long since forgotten the mountains, and flowed through level plains smoothly, beautifully, but not grandly.

This wise and politic nature, however, was suited to the position of a leader. He was to develop a nation. He was to found a religious economy. He was fitted to be a statesman. He had an eventful life and a long one. Yet so adroitly did he manage circumstances, so discreet was he in dealing with human nature, that we see, even in the simple and rude affairs of a shepherd's life, a statesman—and one able to control himself (an ability which constitutes the first element of statesmanship), and then able to control other men, and, last of all, able to seek human ends by the use of principles rather than by expedients. Such was Jacob's gift.

As he became old, time seemed to make him, if not nobler, yet more dignified. The unconscious grandeur of the contrast between him and Pharaoh, when they met, ought long ago to have inspired some brush. In the land of Pyramids, then second to none on earth in civilization, with cities whose mere ruins now fill us with wonder, with an educated priesthood, and a nobility far above any other on earth, the seat of learning, and the bright centre of art, the king called for this shepherd, this leader of a tribe, this patriarch of a kingdom. The scene is recorded in the chapter preceding that from which our text is borrowed. I will read a few verses of it to you.

"And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh."

He took the position of a superior instinctively. There sat the glittering old king on his jeweled throne, surrounded by his satraps; and there sat altogether the king, as between the two, and blessed him.

"And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

Which of those two came out best in conversation? Pharaoh, who said, How old art thou? or Jacob, who made this most exquisite answer?

"And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh."

And it was dark when he had gone out; for all the light of that court was not equal to his face.

The natural monarch was apparent. It was the old shepherd that stood up grandest, and looked down on the king and blessed him. Mark the simple summing up of his life. How strangely such words must have sounded to the monarch in his palace, surrounded by all the luxuries of human life.

At length, as his end drew nigh, and he began to fail, Joseph was informed, and hasted to him. The passage that I have read gives the result of the first interview. It was in the nature of a review of his own life—rather a statement of its results. He looked back on all the long reach of his life, and there were but three impressions that stood up so high above all forgetfulness, above all interests, that he saw nothing else.

When I stood upon the Gorner Grat, in Switzerland, right over above me were Mounts Rosa, Breithorn, and Matterhorn. A hundred smaller swells, peaks, and mountains there were, which, if alone, would have been commanding, but which, in the presence of these grander summits, one did not see. They were but so many approaches to the higher mountains, and seemed to serve them, to watch their skirts, and finish off their lines of grandeur and beauty.

So, in human life, myriads of separate events in our consciousness run together, and report themselves as units in some few great experiences which swallow up the individuality of those elements which once had a separate sphere and seemed important.

Jacob looked up and saw but three things. "God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me." "And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan." God, Love, Grief—these were the sum of his life in retrospect. They were all that he had to speak of. A trinity of the past they were. They dwarfed every thing else. Had he forgotten his early ambition? Had he forgotten the heat and fire of his youth? Had he forgotten his unrighteous management and supplanting of his brother? Had he forgotten his fear and enforced flight? Had he forgotten his residence with Laban? Had he forgotten his toils and watchings, and the shrewdness by which he came off at last rich? Did he forget the return to Palestine, the dreaded meeting of his brother, his troubles with neighboring chiefs, and his wran-

gling children, deceitful, harsh, and cruel? Had he forgotten the horror that spread over him at Joseph's reported death, his unconsolable grief, or his surprise afterward at Joseph's glory in Egypt, which was so great that it could not be spoken in words?

These experiences had been buried. All time could not efface them, nor age overgrow them; yet, in comparison with other influences, they sank down pulseless and voiceless. As he looked back across the plain of life, the three summits that lifted themselves up above all others, and seemed alone worthy of name, were God, Love, Grief.

"God appeared to me at Luz." This one, first, and great appearance of God was memorable in all his life, because it was the first. Others came after, without a doubt. Dreams and visions, supplementary intimations, he had. But there is something in a full first experience which nothing can ever rival or supersede. Many results come so gradually that we watch their unfolding as we do that of a flower whose seed we plant, and all of whose stages we watch and help, and whose blossoming, though it be a pleasure, is never a surprise. But now and then a great experience comes unexpected and unsought. It touches the greater chords of the soul, and lifts it above the common level of emotion, outruns all former knowledge, and fills the soul and overflows it, and amazes it with its own capacity of joy, or love, or grief, or fear, or awe. In the presence of its own intense and surpassing emotions the soul is conscious of nothing else in life. It seems to itself to be the height and centre of the universe, and all other things fall off and grade away from it. The reality of immortality, the indestructibleness of the soul's life, is revealed to it in some of these higher and transcendent experiences, that seem not to have come from natural causes, but to have been let down from above by divine inspiration.

These memorable moments can not be renewed. You may go to the same place, and to the same events, or even to

greater ones, but not with the same result. Knowledge always ends mystery. A first experience brings its mystery, and its surprises are very exhilarating. The surprise, the wonder, the eager expectancy, the half-sense of translation, comes but once in the same faculty.

(But what other experience is like that of the personal disclosure of God in the soul? We have read of God in books and believed. We have gazed upon the earth and the sky, and worshiped. We have yielded faith and feeling to inspirations of the sanctuary, and rejoiced withal. But there comes an hour to some, to many, of transfiguration. It may be in grief; it may be in joy; it may be the opening of the door of sickness; it may be in active duty; it may be under the roof or under the sky, where God draws near with such reality, glory, and power that the soul is filled, amazed, transported. All before was nothing; all afterward will be but as a souvenir. That single vision, that one hour, is worth the whole of life, and throws back a light on all that went before. It solves doubts, it glorifies mysteries which no longer seem abysses beneath us, but golden floods above us. It shoots radiant arrows through all doubts and skepticisms, and gives to the soul some such certainty of invisible spiritual truths as one has of his own personal identity. When one has had this hour of divine disclosure, of full and entrancing vision, it never can be retracted, or effaced, or reasoned against, or forgotten. The impression remains, and the soul goes back to it with assurance and trust, from all its fears, and scruples, and intellectual uncertainties. It fulfills the words of the Master, "And he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.")

Such was Jacob's vision of God. That one interview stamped itself upon his life. As a gold coin receives under the die one pressure which stamps upon it the features that

it is to bear in all its rounds of commerce, so the soul of the patriarch received upon it the image and superscription of God.

When old age was obscuring his reason, and memory, like a worn and wasted bag, was scattering all along the road its contents, yet from the dim horizon of his decrepitude that great experience, "God appeared to me at Luz," was not effaced, or weakened, or dimmed, or forgotten, but was with him in the valley of the shadow of death; and he might say, with Asaph, "My flesh and heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." If one such vision of God, to one confused and feeble moral nature on earth, cross-plowed and harrowed by cares and duties, is yet of such wondrous power, what will the sight of God be in the heavenly land, where we shall see him as he is, and face to face?

Though less august, yet perhaps even more affecting, was the second of the three remembered experiences of his life—Love. Of all those whom he had known, only two names remained to him in that twilight between this life and the other, where he stood—God and Rachel. There is something in the helplessness of former days to express affection that touches every generous soul. Modern loves have had their literature. Dante has lifted up his Beatrice and made her the world's admiration. Petrarch's Laura will not be forgotten while letters last. Poets build temples in verse wherein they enshrine love and give it immortality. The letters of Abelard and Heloise will make their names famous to the end of time, which show that they spent their life in repenting of that which was the noblest thing that belonged to that life—the fact that they loved each other. In the days in which they lived, love, under the touch of superstition, had withered.

But in those far-away days in which the patriarch lived men were without literature, without the instruments of expression, and the great heart carried its love unspoken. Yet this simple scene on the boundary of the other life is a testimony to Rachel more touching and exquisite, by its very

helplessness, than any man has ever laid at the feet of his beloved. The simple mention of her name by the side of that of God, in this last tremulous moment of his life, is itself a monument to her, to her goodness, to her lovableness, to the ascendency which she gained over the patriarch's heart. I would rather be Rachel than Laura.

Is it not among the things of note and of grandeur to see a soul walking along life upheld by a full and perfect love? Others had been dear to him, but Rachel alone filled his capacity of love. She left no part of his life unfertilized. The outward life had been full of cares, dangers, business, and change. This inward life had been silent, and had had little expression. Persons approaching this chief would not have dreamed of its depth and power. They would have seen his state, his authority, his wealth, but not that spring which, though hidden, fed his joy and made it green.

But in his last hours the flocks were forgotten. The gold and silver, the raiment and the riches—these external elements sank out of sight, and left disclosed that deep and hidden source of his life, a soul-satisfying love.

Next to God, a true human love is the most powerful for good, and fruitful in joy. Of all human possibilities, whether it be of father or mother, of wife or child, of friend or hero, no one has lived to his whole capacity who has not felt the fullness of an overmastering love.

To most men love is a kind of well to which they resort when they are thirsty, and draw the crystal treasure for their present need, and then resort again to other satisfying experiences. But there is a love that, like a fountain, needs no cord or pole to draw withal, but, full, pulsing night and day, in all seasons, sparkling, abundant, pours forth its treasure, not by the measure of a bucket, or by the capacity of a need, but according to the fullness of its own life. To have had such a vision of God, and such a love for Rachel, was to connect him with all that is highest and noblest in the experience of the human race.

The third of these experiences was that Rachel was buried. All men know grief, and griefs; but to be taken possession of; filled full; to have the soul rolled in an abyss of darkness with no east for a morning, and hardly a west; with a memory of a sun that has gone down apparently into darkness—this is a great experience. Such to Jacob was the death of Rachel. His very love was swallowed up in his grief. His whole life, seen in retrospect, was this: "I lost her. As I was in the way she left me." This man, that stood so high among his own people—this man, that was admitted to the presence of the king, and that was full of years, and honors, and wealth, in looking back upon his life, said, "I remember God, and I remember Rachel that died." These were all he had left to remember. The wail measures the foregoing joy. The loss is the sign of the preciousness. What the heart can suffer tells what the heart can enjoy. It is not the rude and spontaneous outburst that tells what love is. It certainly is not the exquisite and ecstatic description that tells what love is. Sorrow is the measure of love. Sorrow is the true symbol of love. How much we suffer for another tells how much we love that other. Therefore mother above all others is the lover. When Rachel died, the whole world had but one man in it, and he was solitary, and his name was Jacob.

But what are common griefs but a variation of prosperity, the shadow which joy casts? There is no substance without a shadow; there is no joy without a sorrow; but, after all, both sorrows and joys are, for the most part, like clouds in summer, whose fleecy substance in the air and whose moving shadow on the fields are both fleeting and effectless.

But griefs of the heart are as visitations of God. They are powers in the soul. They rule and endure. Jacob, at the very close of life, looking back across the desert, saw but three great landmarks in all his life. The first as he looked back, the one next to him, was grief. That led him still higher, to love. And that stood up against the background of a higher and the highest—God.

With this unfolding, and the suggestions which I have carried with me in the narrative, let me close with a few points of application.

1. See how perfectly we are in unity with the life of this one of the earliest men. How perfectly we understand him! How the simplest experiences touch us to the quick! Our tears fall for him that passed away four thousand years ago as if we stood and heard his voice. The unity of the race of man is proved, not by monuments, not by the results which he achieves, but by the common experiences of the soul. The fundamental affections, the great faculties, which God put into man at his making—these stand related from the beginning of the world down to the end, so that wherever you go you find that which is original and constituent in man. You recognize in every nation, in every tribe, your fellow-men, your brethren. Go to Egypt, and stand among the sphinxes, the Pyramids, the old and wondrous temples, and you are a stranger in a strange land, and it seems scarcely less than a ghastly dream. Go farther East, behold the ruined architecture, revive the manners and customs of the Syrian and Babylonian empires, and you seem still among a strange people. If they should rise and speak to you, their tongues would be as strange to you as yours would be to them. But let a maiden speak her love, and instantly you know that voice. The works that their hands wrought are wondrous. The affections that throb in their heart are familiar. The things that they lived for outwardly—see how widely you are separated from these. How different are their laws, their institutions, and their methods of commerce from ours! How strange to us are their political economy and their ecclesiastical system! Touch that which man fashioned and formed, and man is disjointed, and split apart by rivers, and mountains, and times, and ages; but touch the human heart and let that speak, and all men rise up and say, "That voice is my voice." Reach but the feeling of love, and every human being says, "It is my brother; it is my sis-

ter." Strike those chords that bring out the experience of grief, and every man wails with the hoary wailers of antiquity. Man is not a unit by virtue of the fruits of his intellect and the works of his hand, but by virtue of those eternal identities of sentiment and affection which are common to all men in all nations and ages. We stand by the side of Jacob to-day, and are familiar with every step of his inward life; whereas, if we go back to the literature, and customs, and institutions of the age in which he lived, they are all strange to us. That which comes out of men estranges one from another. That which we keep in us makes all men kin.

2. The filling-up of life, however important in its day, is in retrospect very insignificant. When the patriarch looked back through his life, there were but two or three things, as I have said, that seemed to have happened to him, and yet there were a million. They grouped themselves into two or three, and it seemed to him as though his life might be expressed by that brief formula—God, Rachel, Grief. And with us it will be so. The frets that come upon us; the anger that rolls its storms in our sky; the jealousies, the envyings, the fears, the hopes, the petty piques, the burdensome cares, the satisfactions, the thousand lights and shadows of superficial life—these speck the hour and clothe the summer of our experience; but, after all, when you have gone a little way from them, they are as if they had not been.

Where is all that gay plumage which the trees lifted up some six months agone? Where is all that purple garniture of the fields that delighted every eye that looked upon it? The fields are bare and russet, and the trees hold up their branches against the sky without leaf, or blossom, or fruit.

Look back upon those ten thousand experiences which you passed through last year. How many of them can you revive? How many of them could you now recite? If narrated to you, how like the history in a novel would they be to you! We are neither as happy nor as miserable as we think. There are but few fast colors in human experience.

The dyes that seem so bright to-day wash out to-morrow. The substance of man's life—how useful and needful it is; and yet how fragile and insignificant compared with certain great spiritual features, certain grand, fundamental elements which shape life and character, immortality and destiny!

3. The significance of events is not to be judged by their outward productive force, nor by their power of reporting themselves to our senses, but by their productiveness in the inward life. All that a man constructs out of matter, all that he does as a member of society, must have its importance; but, after all, these things are temporal, and therefore transient. It is wise to build up men according to the methods that God has ordained. Human government, human society, industries of every kind, are ordinances of God—not such ordinances as the Church has. Men ought to dig, to smelt, to construct, to store; men ought to be seamen and landsmen; men ought to be husbandmen, manufacturers, merchants. The business of life is of consequence, but it is not of the highest consequence. It is an instrument, and not the end; for all that a man accumulates, the matter that makes him powerful here, stays on this side of the grave. All that he constructs in himself of thought and feeling he will carry with him.

Now tell men that those are the strongest that stand yonder, and they will ask, "What are they worth?" Of bonds, nothing; of houses and lands, nothing; of ships and goods, nothing. And when you tell them this, they say, smiling, "You are given to poetry, to tell me that those are the men of power. For my part," say they, "give me a good farm and substantial funds to manage it with; give me a bank; give me ships; you may have your inside treasures, but I would rather have material treasures so long as I live in a physical world." But when men come to walk the shadowy way; when the great Tax-gatherer calls all men before him, to one he says, "Give me thy ships." "O Death, they

are thine," saith the man. To others he says, "Give me thy houses and lands;" and they and their possessions part company without papers. To another he says, "Give me thy funds that thou hast toiled for;" and the man that stood highest in his day and generation is stripped bare, and shoved out of the world with no capital for the life to come.

Then comes another man, a man of *dreams*, as he is called. Death says to him, "Yield up thy ships." "I have none." "Yield up thine acres." "I have none." "Yield up thy bonds and funds." "I have none." "Yield up thy thoughts." "Nay, O Death, my thoughts are mine, and beyond thy power." "Yield up thy affections." "Nay, Death, thou canst not touch my affections. And my hope, my immortality—these are not in thy schedule. That which I am by the grace of God, thou canst not tax or hold. I carry all that with me." The man that is mightiest in this world leaves his might behind him; and the man that is weakest in this world carries his might with him. When we step into that other world where things are measured according to their realities, the man that has the most has the least, and the man that has the least has the most. And so the first shall be last, and the last shall be first.

4. In looking back through the events of life, though they are innumerable, though they are amazing in their variety and in their diversity, yet those that remain at last are very few—not because all the others have perished, but because they group themselves and assume moral unity in the distance. We find that the patriarch's life, in looking at it retrospectively, summed itself up in two or three experiences which had their respective types. He speaks of his life as being all represented by these few things. And our life will appear, by-and-by, in the same way. It consists not in the abundance of the things which we possess. The things that now seem of the least account will seem of the most transcendent importance. What you retain that connects you with God, what you have known in life that was most generous, and

deep, and sweet of love, and what great cleansing griefs you have suffered—these will stand highest in the last hours of life. Though they seem to perish, yet they are more in number and more precious as we draw near to heaven. And sorrowers and sufferers, when they look back upon their sorrow and suffering at the close of life, will see beyond it love, beyond that God, and beyond them all eternity and blessedness.

Let us, then, not revoke the duties of the day; but let us remember that there is a higher fruit than that of which man thinks. And while we are building up the family and the state, and discharging our functions in the great realm of civilized life, let us remember that these are but instruments; that the true life is that which is carried on in man's silent thought and deeper affections, and that only he lives that day by day is projecting his life into the other sphere.

And as you look back from your last hours, may it be yours, joined, as you are, in a common faith with the old patriarch, to behold, standing clearest in the horizon, these higher experiences of your moral nature. There may they stand, fixed and radiant, when the fret, and fever, and suffering of the body have ceased, and have no more record forever.

PRAYER.

We are drawn, O thou ascended One, by all the memories and associations of this day, to look up that bright and shining way whither thou hast gone, and to behold thee where thou art, a Friend and a Savior, exalted far above all human suffering — far above the weakness that once befell thee. Thou hast burst the bonds not only of death, but of human life, that imprisoned thee, and now thou art God over all, blessed forever. We rejoice that we are related to thee. By thine own grace thou hast made us blood kindred, and nothing can be thine which shall not also, in measure, be ours; nor canst thou ascend in glory without taking thine own, that where thou art, they may be also. And all that there is of blessedness in heaven, and all that there is in the coming

ages, thou are holding for thine own as much as for thyself. And we rejoice that thy abode, forever filling, shall never be filled, and that there is to be room for the incoming of all the generations of time. There is in thine heart ample love and provision, and in thine hand power inexhaustible. Thou canst not augment the bounds of thy kingdom beyond thy power of care and of love; and there is no such thing as weariness with thee, thou that art without shadow of turning, the unslumbering Watchman of Israel! We rejoice, therefore, and are strong, not in the sources of human joy and strength, but in thee. We rejoice this morning, and acclaim thee God, Redeemer, Father; and we call ourselves thy children, since it is that sweet name which thou hast been pleased to hold forth to us, and to lay upon us, and which, resting on us, is more than a coronet. We rejoice in all the fullness and sweetness of its meaning. We mourn that we can carry it with us so little. We mourn that as by the winds the leaves of flowers are blown away, so our sweetest thoughts of thee are taken away from us; but as, swift-growing, the leaves come again, bearing rich perfumes, so these thoughts return, and, by help obtained of thee, we continue to be blessed by thee.

And now we commend ourselves to thy fatherly care. Thou, in whose hands is all power; thou, that hast all wisdom; thou, that art goodness itself; thou, that hast taught to love all that know how to love, be pleased, we beseech of thee, to accept the offering of ourselves which we make. Consecrate us to thy service. Make us more worthy of thy taking and of thy keeping. By thy providence and by thy grace, educate us so that we may rise, step by step, to purity, and spiritual wisdom, and godliness.

Remember all in this congregation according to their several wants, and interpret, not as they interpret, but as thou seest and thou knowest. How much better are thy thoughts toward us than our own! How much better is that way which we shun, and which God marks out, than that way which we seek, and which God forbids! We beseech of thee, look into the heart of every one. Are there those that sit under great trouble? Thou, that hast been in trouble, dost know how to succor them. Are there any that are in grief? Thou hast been a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Are there any that are heart-sick from hope deferred? Hast not thine own heart felt the spear? Hast thou not mourned in darkness? Are there those who, with all their other losses, have lost the evidence of Christ's acceptance of them, and

their hope of God? Didst not thou cry out, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" and dost thou not know their pang and extremity of sorrow? O God, draw near to all that sit beneath the cloud. Minister strength and consolation to them. Let the light begin to shine into their darkness. Grant that they may feel that if God is for them, none can be against them. May they rise up and put their trust in thee.

We beseech thee that thou wilt sanctify to every one the afflictions which thou art laying upon them. It is a time of trouble.* All through our land are mourners in unwonted numbers. We behold thy providence, the mystery and the wonder of it; and therefore we lay our hands upon our mouth, and our mouths in the dust. For our sins thou art chastising this people. But, we pray thee, look upon the individual mourners. Whilst thou art doing a fearful and marvelous work in this great nation, O Lord, forget not to be gracious. Enter in and comfort the widow, the orphan, and all that in sorrow drink their daily cup and eat their daily bread. Remember all that are distressed, and bind up their bruised and wounded hearts.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt look upon those in this congregation who are in the midst of cares, and duties, and burdens of life, and that are harassed with various perplexities. Grant to every one whatever he needs, that his strength may be as his day is. May all have occasion to thank God for his presence and for the richness of his grace. We pray thee, instruct each of us how to take the affairs of this life without being overborne by its responsibilities, and without being led by them away from thee. Teach us, we beseech of thee, how to carry ourselves so that we shall evermore have the presence of Christ, and the sweet suggestions of the Spirit of God. And teach us how to bear more and more of the humanity of the Gospel and of the love of Christ into our fellowship with each other—into our intercourse with man. Teach us how to do as thou dost, according to the measure of our power.

Bless any strangers that may be in our midst; and if, in the suggestions of this place and of this worship, they bethink them of the dear ones that are far from them, and of the house of God in which they have been accustomed to sit, and if in their ears are sounds of melodies remembered long, grant that still among those who are their brethren, though they be of strange names, they may feel children's comfort in their Father's house. Heed their tears. Answer their

* The civil war was in progress at this time.

prayers. Comfort their hearts. Bless those whom they fain would have blessed.

Go forth with all our hearts and thoughts to those that are separated from us, wherever they may be. Remember, we beseech of thee, those of our brethren who are in circumstances of peril and toil. Many yet walk in the battle-field. God preserve them! Many are wounded and suffering. God comfort and heal them! Many are scattered hither and thither through this land. Though they be wanderers, let that thread of faith, which invisibly connects us to thee, hold them, that we and they may still be one in Christ Jesus. And we pray that all who are in distant lands, or in remote portions of our own land, and who remember us Sabbath by Sabbath, and sing the songs that we sing, and look to the hours that we observe, may be blessed of thee. Give them evermore to partake of the food of which we partake, and that it may strengthen them as we are strengthened.

Look upon the poor and sick in our midst, to comfort them, to cheer them, and to heal them. And grant that our sympathies may be exercised more toward them. Look upon all the classes around about us that need the Gospel, and have it not. May there be more light and power in the churches, whereby to go forth and preach Christ Jesus to those that lack a knowledge of the Savior. Bless all efforts for the reformation of morals. Stay the flood of intemperance that threatens us. Hold back this great people, we beseech of thee, from sottish and besotting sins.

Grant, we pray thee, a blessing to rest upon this nation. Remember the President of these United States,* whom thou hast placed in a position of great responsibility and of trying labors. Thou hast been his God. Thou hast given the spirit of wisdom to rest upon him. Thou hast led him out of dangerous and difficult places. Still guide him unto the end, and grant that he may never be without thy presence and thy conscious guidance. May his thoughts be lifted up to thee evermore, that not the transient favor of man, but the abiding wisdom of God, may be his rule. Bless all others that are in authority about him, and that are his counselors. Bless all that are assembled to make laws for this nation. Remember the generals of our army, and the soldiers, every one. Grant that victory may be given us for the sake of humanity, and justice, and liberty. Remember the poor outcast slaves. Give to them that freedom which is their right, and with it give them that instruction which shall open to

* Abraham Lincoln.

them that more noble liberty wherewith thou makest thy people free. We thank thee that thou hast guided these poor creatures of thine, and kept them from imprudence, and caused them to be praised for their wisdom. Grant that the day appointed for their deliverance may soon come, and that at last they may go free. And in their freedom may we too, at last, be free. And we beseech of thee, when thou hast purged out the sins from this nation, when thou hast punished us for our transgressions, that there may be a staying of the red cloud of war. Some wind may there arise that shall sweep it away into the wilderness, with all its devastations. In thy good time deliver us from chastisement, and suffering, and peril. Grant that our relief may so come that all nations shall see the salvation of God therein, that thy name may be glorified thereby, and that this people may become a mightier witness for Christ and for Christianity than has ever before existed. While so many are watching for our downfall, grant that they may behold a nation rise, not for the terror of other nations, but for the consolation of the poor, for the instruction of the ignorant, and for the hope of the oppressed; and may this great people be self-restrained, and tempered in their ambition; and may their prosperity, and wealth, and power all swell and augment the glorious triumphs of Christ in the world. Hasten that day which has been so long prayed for, and which so many have died without seeing; let it at last begin to dawn over the mountains, and all flesh shall see thy salvation. We ask it for Christ's sake. Amen.

XVIII.

What will you do with Christ?

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, in February, 1864.

What will you do with Christ?

"Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"—Matt., xxvii., 22.

Pilate, a Roman procurator, was for ten years governor of Judea under the Emperor Tiberius. (History represents him as stern, cruel, stubborn, and avaricious.) Nor is there any thing in the Gospels to modify such a characterization. He acts as if he were just such a man as he is represented by history to be.

The question which Pilate puts indicates expostulation full as much as perplexity. (An honest man, sitting in his place, would have found no trouble—would certainly have had no doubt as to duty; for Christ had lived and taught during Pilate's administration, and there is evidence, also, in the text of Scripture, that Pilate had a general knowledge of the purity of his doctrine and the integrity of his life.) (All the allegations made against him and the evidences which had been presented in confirmation of them were so manifestly insufficient for condemnation, nay, even for blameworthiness, that Pilate's mind was not affected in the slightest degree with trouble from conflicting evidence, or the intricacy of principles involved.) It was a case perfectly clear in itself. Pilate sat there as a supreme arbiter—as a ruler and judge. It was his business to consider Christ's conduct in relation to the laws of the land, and in that relation there was not a shadow of evidence against him. He stood morally acquitted of every charge upon which he was arraigned. Nay, Pilate was perfectly well acquainted with the accusers

of Christ. He knew them to be selfish, ambitious, vindictive men; and he was entirely convinced in this particular case that Christ was persecuted by them from reasons of malice; for it is declared that "he knew that for envy they had delivered him."

This, then, was a case which to an honest and a just man would have had no difficulties whatever. (There was but one plain duty to be performed, and that was to acquit Christ, and to discharge him.) But to a politic man, who only regards men's moods as they affect his own interests, and their moral qualities only as so many collateral elements of his own welfare—to such a one there may be some trouble in such a case; for the people had been stirred up by their rulers, and were almost riotous; and the chief priests and influential men were hot with rage. (Pilate was satisfied that Christ was innocent, and ought to be released.) But how could he acquit him, and yet stand well with the ruling classes? That was the perplexity. He wanted to do two opposite things; he wished to reconcile two irreconcilable courses. He therefore reasons with them persuasively—"What evil hath he done?"—hoping to bring them into a better, juster state of mind. (He endeavors to appease them by offering another victim for their wrath—Barabbas.) And so he tries various expedients to get rid of pronouncing condemnation upon Christ—the thing that they wanted him to do, and that he shrunk from doing.

The most extraordinary part, however, of this scene, and the one which shows at once the greatest moral sensibility in Pilate, and the most profound moral ignorance, is that recorded in the twenty-fourth verse of this narrative.

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it."

This man was appointed to administer justice, and in the clearest possible case, he refused to do it. He was appoint-

ed to stand between men and the law, and to secure punishment for disobedience and safety for obedience, and he utterly refused to perform this high duty. He denied the instinct of common humanity. He broke the law he was to administer. He violated his own knowledge and sense of justice. He deliberately gave an innocent man over into the hands of his raging enemies to be put to the most cruel death known to that age, ingenious in cruelty. And then, having been faithless to every duty, he coolly puts off all his own responsibility upon the Jews! for they were conspirators with him. There were two parties to this crime—the Jews, who demanded Christ's crucifixion, furious with rage; and Pilate, who gave him over to them, cool, calculating, politic, selfish. However impressive, then, it may have been to the spectators, and however much it may have eased him to wash his hands, it could not touch his guilt, or wash away the blackness of it from his memory. In this awful tragedy he was second to none in guilt.

But, my dear friends, is Pilate the only one to whom this question comes: "What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?" He had to meet this question, and to answer it; and every man that is before me has Christ upon his hands, and is called to answer this question. You have not been born in a heathen land. Had you been, you would have escaped the settlement of this question. But, born in a Christian land, amidst Christian institutions, and especially instructed carefully in Christian truth, you can scarcely forget for an hour that there is a Christ who claims authority; who demands obedience; who solicits love; who is declared to be Son of God, Savior of the world, your judge! He is now your guide and governor, and is by-and-by to be your rewarder or punisher. And this august personage is before you, with claims that reach the very marrow of your life and the very centre of your nature, and which include the whole scope of your being.

It makes no difference in this matter whether you adjourn

the settlement of this question or not. You may put it off from one year to another; you may adjourn it throughout youth, and from youth to manhood; you may neglect it through every period of manhood, and from manhood to old age; but there is no such thing as finally getting rid of the question, "What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?" It must come up for answering, first or last, by every one of you.

You may seek to forget this question in pleasure; may thread its mazes, may drink its ruby cup, dance its gay revel through, filling the day with laughter, and the night with joyous gayety, until one who looks upon you may think that no such thing as serious trouble can ever reach you; and yet there will come pauses when out of all your joys there will rise this question, "What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?" He is something to you. He has a hold upon you. If, as is the case, we sprang forth from God, and bear in us something of his nature and spirit, there are sympathetic cords that bind us to him; and this question will be borne in upon us, in spite of pleasure, "What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?"

You may overlay this question with business. You may exhaust your energies with work; you may fill up the hours with zealous industry; and in this great Babel, amid outcries, and grinding wheels, and fierce encounters of selfish men, each determined to secure wealth or honor, you may get rid, for a time, of this question; and yet there is leisure in all occupations; the busiest business has its pauses; there are still hours and thoughtful hours to every one; and in them the question will come up, "What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?"

Men may put off and put away the question; they may demand that it be let alone, and say, "What have I to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? I will not have thee to rule over me;" but this is a question that will not be silenced, that will not be shaken off. Every time you behold a

true Christian man with the power of God resting upon him, and with a face shining as if he had been in heaven, this thought will come back to you, "What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?" Every heroic deed done in the name of Christ; every great grief, or wrong, or sorrow borne in the name of Christ; every joyful death made triumphant through Christ, will bring back to you the question, "What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?" Every time you part company with trusted and loved friends, and they go to the Lord's table, and you turn away and go otherwheres, the question will come back to you, "What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?"

It is written on the sanctuary; it sounds out through every Sabbath; it comes from the Bible; it rises from the lives of good men; it meets you in the field; it questions you sharply in health; it dwells with you in sickness; the chamber of bereavement whispers it; the grave breathes it—"What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?" You can not get rid of this question. Living or dying, it urges itself upon you.

In dealing with this momentous duty which is thus inevitably rolled upon you, you may deal with Christ, first, as if you were merely a historical critic. You may sit in judgment upon him—upon his life, his disposition, his deeds, his faith; you may sit in judgment upon his disciples and upon his crucifiers; upon his whole influence on the age in which he lived, and on subsequent ages; but you can not in this way dispose of the question, "What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?" It is a personal question. It is not historic. You are not forbidden to go into historic investigations of it; but these are only the husks—the kernel is inside.

Nay, you may bring your reason to bear on Christ, and, on the one hand, you may, by proofs and arguments, produce convictions in your bosom which shall exalt him into all heavenly dignity; you may ascribe to him all honor; you

may rank him as not unequal to his own eternal Father; you may pronounce, in a most orthodox manner, the very truth needful to the perfect divinity of Christ, and may even be jealous for this truth; or, on the other hand, still using your reason, you may discrown him; you may strip him of the robes of empire; you may, as some do, rank him among men, till he stands a fellow-sinner by your side, erring and fallible—you may employ your intellect upon Christ in either of these ways, but you will fail thus to settle this question, "What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?" It will not down under any such treatment.

You may bring your passions or your superstitions to bear, but they will not settle it. You may revile him and buffet him in the spirit of a ribald infidelity, or you may surround him with a system of formal observances which shall occupy your external zeal, leaving him meanwhile in the centre untouched; but neither one nor the other of these ways will put to rest this question, "What shall I do with this Jesus that is called Christ?" It will come back in spite of formal observance or of cold unbelief.

You must meet this question in the very way in which Christ is presented to you.

Let us, then, look a moment at the way in which Christ is presented to us.

"Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." I present Jesus to you as the atoning Savior; as God's sacrifice for sin; as that new and living way by which alone a sinful creature can ascend and meet a pure and a just God. I bring this question home to you as a sinner. Oh man! full of transgressions, habitual in iniquities, tainted and tarnished, utterly undone before God, what will you do with this Jesus that comes as God's appointed sacrifice for sin, your only hope, and your only Savior? Will you accept him? Will you, by personal and living faith, accept him as your Savior from sin? I ask not that you should go with me into a discourse upon the relations of Christ's life, of his

sufferings, of his death, to the law of God, or to the government of God. Whatever may be the philosophy of those relations, the matter in hand is one rather of faith than of philosophy; and the question is, Will you take Christ to be your soul's Savior? What will you do with Christ? This question must be met and answered, either fairly, or by the fact of life itself. You *will* settle it in one way or the other. You will decide to do something with Christ.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In the midst of all the burdens and trials of this mortal life, he presents himself to you as your strength and your redeemer. I ask you what you will do with this Jesus? Have you any need of him? Have you any place for him? Have you any desire for him? Is he to you the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely? Or do you feel that in your own strength, or skill, or prosperity, you have provision enough for all that you need, and that he is an intruder upon your world-plans? He says, "Come to me for strength and support." What will you do with this Jesus that thus proffers his aid to you? Again he says, "If any man thirst, let him come untome and drink." That is, over and above the wants that pertain to this life, there are yearnings, and hungerings, and longings of the higher nature, that some men seek to satisfy in poetry, some in art, and some in other food adapted to our spiritual being; and Christ says, "Only I can satisfy the highest nature—the need of the soul." I present Christ to your higher reason, to your nobler nature, and say, What will you do with this Jesus, that places himself in such a relation to your wants?

Nay, he is presented to us as our forerunner, gone to stand before God for us; as our mediator; as our intercessor. Have you any business to be transacted in heaven? Have you any interests there? Have you sent there any that were as dear to you as your own life? Do your children seem to have gone from this world without a nurse? Do they seem

to have gone into the great invisible abysm without parentage and without guidance? Has your own soul any business to be transacted there? Have you any hope of immortality and of the glory of another and a better state? Have you any thing that is worth more to you than silver, or gold, or honor, or pleasure? Have you any thing invested in the other life? And do you need that some one there should think for you, feel for you, and arrange for you? Do you need a forerunner, a mediator, an intercessor? Christ stands at the right hand of God, and offers himself to every living soul as one that is there to intercede for him. What, then, will you do with this Jesus that so offers himself to you? Do you need him? Will you accept him?

But more particularly Christ comes to us, not only as a Being of infinite love, so loving as willingly to give himself a sacrifice for us, but as a Being that needs love, and solicits human love. There is a way of presenting this offensively so that it shall not touch any noble thought or feeling; but, on the other hand, it may be so represented that it shall be pleasing, and touch the noblest thoughts and feelings. We may conceive of a divine parental heart that can not be satisfied without the love in return of every one of those that it loves. There is a conception of God bending over men, and awakening their love, developing it, and then rejoicing in it, even as we bend over our children and solicit their affection. If such a thought is not full of beauty and loveliness to us, it is because we are so low as not to be able to appreciate it. Christ comes to every man, and demands of him love. He presents himself in every aspect in which a greater mind can be presented to a lower; he presents himself as the Son of God, the Savior of the world, your personal friend, and your elder brother; he embodies in himself every tender relationship of which we can conceive; and he asks, he claims as his right, that you should love him. What will you do with this Jesus that so pleads for and demands your love?

If love were a sealed fountain, if you had never learned

to love, you would be less to blame for neglecting to love Christ. But among the things taught earliest is love; among the things most variously educated in life is love; and among the things remembered latest is love. When the child comes into life, almost the first thing he does is to send out his heart in trust, and confidence, and love; and though the objects of his primal affection are limited and imperfect, they are sufficient to excite in him the dormant spark of love. But when it is the infinite Creator; when it is the glorious God; when it is he that for you has laid down his own life; when it is he, rather, that has taken it up again, and lives to intercede for you; when it is he that sends you, day by day, fresh glories, and that, night after night, surrounds you with mercies; when it is he that through all the periods of your life watches over you with most tender solicitude and scrupulous fidelity; that outvies all other affections, and showers his own upon you more copiously than clouds ever rained drops, or seasons ever gave forth fruit—when it is he that comes to you, saying, "My son, give me thine heart"—what will you do with this Jesus that yearns for your love? Will you love him?

He claims, likewise, from us a filial obedience springing from the spirit of love. There are inexorable demands of obedience inwrought into the fibres of creation. There are laws demanding obedience that take no refusal, and that carry punishment close behind their demands. Fire, water, poisons, heat, cold, warmth—these, and ten thousand other agents and elements of nature, come demanding obedience, and giving us no choice. With them it is do or die! But it is not so that God comes to us. He demands that we shall obey him because we love him. He comes to us with this most reasonable appeal to our conscience through our affections: "Because my commandments are holy, and just, and good—because I am your Father, and because I love you and seek your welfare, I demand your obedience." I present Christ to every man here to-night, claiming, not the obedience which comes from a fear of damnation in case of diso-

bedience, but the obedience which comes from a spirit of love. I present him to you on grounds of generosity and affection, and say, What will you do with this Jesus, that comes to ask of you the obedience of love?

Nay, Christ demands that there shall be on our part that appreciation of divine excellence which breaks forth in rapture and joy, or, in other words, in worship and adoration.

When a man, standing before a magnificent work of art, or some wonderful phenomenon of nature—some rugged mountain, some thunderous fall, like that of Niagara, or some beautiful landscape — finds his taste so awakened that he loses command of himself, and breaks forth into an ecstasy of admiration, his sensations are transcendent.

But when we stand, not before unspeaking canvas, or inert mountains, or senseless water, but in the presence of some hero—some man that has stood among men nobler than the noblest, and truer than the truest, and has carried the fate of a nation in his hand without betraying it; some Kossuth or some Garibaldi, then how do we tremble in transports of delight! It is a joyful intoxication. It is an ecstasy. We need now and then to break away from common relations. We need occasionally to go where our intellect can pour itself forth unrestrained, where our faith can soar without hinderance, and our joyous, generous feelings can freely take a holiday. How grand a thing is a true man, that carries in his life and conduct something of God! And who is there that is so unfortunate as not to know what a glorious thing it is to go out in admiration, almost in worship, toward such a man?

What, then, ought our feelings to be when we stand, not before a man, but before the everlasting God; that Being who created the innumerable orbs of which this earth is but a specimen; whose ways generations and ages have sought in vain to find out; of whose love all the affections of father, and mother, and husband, and wife, and child, and brother, and sister, and friend, and lover, are but faint intimations,

and of whose attributes the divine qualities of men are but the slightest hints? And when he comes as our maker and preserver, and the author of the eternal bliss prepared for us, how blessed ought to be the prerogative and privilege of making him the object of our highest worship!

What will you do with this Jesus, that stands before you asking for your admiration? He that was discrowned once, but is crowned now; he that was once a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, but is now a Prince and a Savior; he that once walked the weary way of Jerusalem, and climbed the heights of Olivet, and the steeper heights of Calvary, but now walks the streets of the New Jerusalem with unclouded glory—he stands before you. What will you do with him? He is proffered to you; he is yours by good right; you were born for him, and are to be born again for him: what will you do with him?

Christ holds up his own beautiful life before you, with all that majesty, and purity, and justice, and simplicity, and truth, that has made him the admiration of ages, and demands that you shall live as he lived. I present him to you to-night. What will you do with this Jesus?

Such, then, are the claims upon you of your Judge, your Savior, your Deliverer, your Friend, your Teacher, your Prophet, Priest, and King—your God! I present the Lord Jesus Christ at every single man's door. He stands and knocks. He claims admission. He lays these claims before you. What will you do with this Jesus?

My dear friends, you may think that you can put off this matter; you may think that because you forget it, and cover it down in various ways, it has passed from you; but this is one of those cases in which a man's life is itself a judgment and decision. What you will do with Christ is being determined every single day you live. "I will neglect him:" if that is your conduct, then that is your decision. "I will dishonor him:" if that is your conduct, then that is your decision. "I will cast him off, and tread him under foot:" if

that is your conduct, then that is your decision; for it does not need that a man's tongue should interpret his life. A man's life interprets itself; and what one does and continues to do, that is what he decides to do. He that is mean, decides to be mean; he that is a robber, decides to be a robber; he that is gross and groveling, decides to be gross and groveling; he that lives for the world, decides to live for the world. There is nothing that interprets a man's decisions as do actions. Now what is your decision in respect to Christ, whom I bring to you? What are you now doing with him? Judging from the decisions of your actions and life, what have you done, what are you doing, and what will you do with him?

My dear friends, there is something awful in the contrast between the scenes that took place in relation to Pilate and Christ. See that Roman procurator, with barbaric glory calculated to strike with powerful effect the ignorant masses, with immense power and wealth in his hands, and with the lives of men at his disposal—see him, selfish, cold, without moral feeling, issuing judgments simply with reference to his own worldly interests! Before him stood Christ, accused of wishing to be the King of the Jews. Pilate asked him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" He said, "Thou sayest." His enemies made their accusations against him, and Pilate said, "Hearest thou how many things they witness against thee?" To this question he answered not a word. He refused to reply to any of the base charges brought against him. Pilate knew that this man, unbefriended, betrayed, deserted, mute, stripped, and about to be mocked, was innocent, and that he would go forth, if he gave him into the hands of the fierce, cruel soldiery, to be crowned with thorns and to be spit upon. And Pilate sat regal on his throne while Christ was despised, rejected, condemned, and led forth to the cruel death of the cross! That is one scene.

After a few years, Pilate, accused of treachery, went to Rome. The emperor meanwhile dying, his successor banish-

ed him. Afterward he committed suicide. His spirit ascended, and before the crowned Judge, whom all angels loved and revered, stood Pilate, the unjust judge! Behold the change that has taken place in their relative positions! See how the once weak, and despised, and lowly, and down-trodden, and scourged, and crucified Jesus sits supreme Lord and Head over all, while before him Pilate quails and trembles, and calls upon the mountains and rocks to fall on him, and hide him from the face of the Lamb! That is the other scene.

Is there not to be such a contrast in your case? Now you live gayly through the days as they pass. Now, when the question comes, in ten thousand forms, "What wilt thou do with this Jesus?" you prorogue it; you adjourn it; you cover it, sometimes with business, sometimes with pleasure; you put it off, sometimes in one way and sometimes in another. Meanwhile your life is settling it. You deny Christ, you reject him, you treat him with contempt; but the day will come, and that speedily, when you too will stand before the throne of God, to give an account of the way in which you have lived. And then Christ will render that irreversible sentence which shall control your eternal destiny.

Is it not, then, wise that every one should give heed to this question, "What wilt thou do with this Jesus?" You were born of God; you are living upon his bounty in nature; you are guided and guarded by his providence; you are watched over by his fostering care; you are clothed from his wardrobe; you are maintained at his table; your very ability to support yourself is borrowed from him; your power to think, and will, and act, and the power of your heart to throb health for days, and weeks, and years, comes from him. And all he asks is that for the benefits you receive at his hands you shall feel toward him a corresponding gratitude. I appeal to your reason; I appeal to your honor; I appeal to every generous feeling, every devout instinct, every magnanimous sentiment; and I ask if, in the light of these facts,

your life of sins unrepented of, of disobedience—your life that contemptuously puts Christ aside, is not base and damnable? The meanest man on earth, I think, is he that sins without compunction and without repentance, and buffets Christ with daily contempt.

But the time will soon come when all these things will be revealed in another life; and then the excuses which you urge now will not stand a moment. It will be with men's excuses in the day of judgment, when God looks upon them, as it is with the frost-pictures on a window of a winter morning, when the sun looks upon them—they will be gone with his looking. The excuses which you paint in this life to justify pride, and selfishness, and disobedience, and recreancy, will, the moment you stand before God, melt away. And then it will be too late to rectify mistakes.

I beseech of you, while it is a day of grace, while there is yet opportunity, turn from evil, turn from thoughtlessness, cease to buffet Christ by your lives, honor him, trust in him, and live by faith in him, that you may die in his strength, and reign with him for evermore.

XIX.

Life: its Shadows and its Substance.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, June 17th, 1866.

[Hon. James Humphrey, whose death suggested the following sermon, and is alluded to in it, was the son of Rev. James Humphrey, President of Amherst College. He graduated at that institution at the early age of nineteen, and after several years of the practice of law in Louisville, Ky., removed to New York in 1838, and as one of the firm of Barney, Humphrey, & Butler, soon took a leading position at the New York bar. He entered politics early, was for two terms a member of the Common Council of Brooklyn, where he resided, for one term served as Corporation Counsel, and in 1858, retiring from the law, was nominated and elected to Congress by the Republican party at the age of forty-eight. Succeeded by Hon. M. F. Odell during the years 1860 and 1862, he was re-elected in 1864. Throughout his life he had suffered severely from disease, which did not, however, incapacitate him from arduous and successful labors. An earnest and uncompromising friend of freedom, he opposed all compromise with slavery, and all temporizing measures with the rebellion. An earnest and practical Christian, he witnessed a good profession before many witnesses by his godly life. On Tuesday, the 12th of June, he started for his place in Washington, found himself too ill to proceed, and had barely strength to retrace his steps and reach his home, where he died, Saturday morning, June 16th, 1866. Universally beloved, personally popular beyond the limits of his own party, the sorrow of the community in his death was increased by the fact that it followed almost immediately upon the death of his predecessor, Hon. M. F. Odell. The prayer appended to this sermon is one pronounced by Mr. Beecher at the funeral services.]

Life: its Shadows and its Substance.

"But this I say, brethren, The time is short. It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it. For the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness."—1 Cor., vii., 29–32.

Is it, then, the aim of Christianity to turn this world into a dream-land? Are we to strive for an unnatural judgment as if things were not what they seem to be? Are we to undervalue life's sweetest affections and deepest sentiments as if they were but appearances? Can that be a sound ethical state which idealizes all realities, and turns all substance into shadow, and transmutes the most potent verities into abstraction, and changes fact into fiction?

What! to love as if you did *not* love? To have a kind of hollow-hearted affection? To regard relationship as but a dream? To call by one name, and that name *Nothingness*, all variations and inflections of feeling—joy and sorrow, laughter and tears? Is this the instruction of God's Word? Has God established the physical globe, with its vast economy, and planted us in the middle of it, educating us by its laws, only that we might not recognize them? Has he established the household, the sweet relations of neighborhood, the complex structure of society, only that men might be obliged to deny their sense, and call them grand and glittering negations?

Surely no! If any one from this exhortation is tempted to such an interpretation, he doubtless misconceives, not the meaning of this passage alone, but the whole Bible teaching; for if there be one thing plainer than another in Scripture

it is the solemnity and value which it throws upon common life and the common things in life. No other book is more intensely realistic than the Word of God. It teaches us to honor life, men, society, occupation, and the homely virtues which have their sphere in secular duties; and surely it can not be so inconsistent with itself as then to undervalue all these things.

Let us therefore look around and recall some of the experiences of our own lives, to see whether we may not find a clew to this remarkable passage.

When, on some summer afternoon, like the glorious, golden, hazy yesterday, parents sit, the labor of the day mostly past, and listen to the sports of their children that are playing beneath the window, and see their houses made of lines scratched upon the ground, and hear them talk of their mimic supper, in which both the dishes and the food are imaginary, and perceive their wild realization of the game at which they play, do they not feel that to the child, as a child, and measured by its then capacities, there is both value and importance in these things? And would they, by a word, discountenance the child's sports, or break their charm, or teach the child that they are but a fantasy and a folly? And yet, when the parents consider the after life of the child, which they understand, though the child does not, do they not smile at his dream-land? It is to the parents as if it were not. It is so, not by taking any thing away from it, but simply by placing alongside of it the same essential qualities in a higher sphere, in larger proportions, in a more glorified estate. And when these very children grow up, and come to remember their childish joys, they do not pour contempt upon them, nor in anywise diminish what there was in them. They recognize that there was to them value and joy in these things; yet they feel that, when compared with the larger experience into which they have entered, that early joy was shadowy and unsubstantial.

In like manner, it is in the power of the ripened mind

to take one look farther forward toward a coming state whose glory and perfectness shall cast all present realizations, not into contempt, but into such relative inferiority that they shall seem to be but shadows, while the invisible and the future shall seem to be the real.

There are two states of mind in which men have an experience in commercial business which is analogous to this of which I have been speaking. The reality and importance of business is not to be denied. It is solemnly to be affirmed. Secular occupation is a part of religious culture. It is a part of the systematic and regular moral education which God designs for the world. It builds up society. It augments the conditions of happiness. It enlarges the powers of men. It multiplies the sources of satisfaction. And, not least, it educates the race in morals. We are not, therefore, in any way to undervalue the constructive and accumulative forces of society. The making of wealth and the using of wealth may be corruptly, selfishly, and arrogantly turned into mischief, but were designed in the divine economy to minister to our moral benefit, and to make us larger and better in our whole being.

And yet there are times when men feel disgust at wealth, and at all the means by which it is sought. There are times of weariness and disappointment, when men are vexed with rivalries, or are overtasked, or have mistaken, or come short; and at such times there is a species of disgust which not only is not to be encouraged, but which is positively mischievous. It is without moral discrimination. It is without just reason. It is the testimony simply of man's weariness, and not of his judgment guided by his moral sense.

But there are hours given to men—to all, I hope, sometimes, and to many often—clear, high, noble, in which they are convinced, not of the unimportance of these secular things, but of the transcendently greater importance of a higher class of realities, of which these are but the shadows and foretokens. There are times in which men feel, not that

earthly treasure is despicable, but that there is a kind of treasure with which that which the earth affords bears no comparison. There are hours when men toil for the money that perishes, and for those treasures that feed the secular and physical conditions of life; and there are happily other hours in which there is an inlooking into a man's spiritual state, and the soul feels itself destined to a wealth that never can fade—that is subject to no bankruptcy. Out of such higher musings (they are but for an hour; they are sometimes but a glance of the soul) the man looks back upon the lower state, not to deride it, but to say, "That which I rightly strived for is all that I thought it to be, but it suggests something yet better—a higher sphere and a nobler realm of achievement, compared with which, though it be invisible, the visible is the shadow, this being the substance."

He who has built a palace for his affections, and cherished them there as very princes, knows two experiences of the like kind in respect to the affections. The earnest reality of heart-life—nothing can take from its importance. Man's life does not lie so much in his physical executive forces, nor in that which he has achieved by wisdom physically applied. Man's life in this sphere rests far more largely on the diffused action of his social sentiments than he is wont to think. And no man that is wise, or humane, or Christian, should undervalue heart-life—I will not say in its intensities and raptures, but rather in its milder manifestations, in its distributive influences.

Yet there are wondrous hours when there rises before the mind such a sense of the imperfections of human love as to make it wholly unsatisfactory to the soul. It must be so. It is not a question of blameworthiness. There is a vision of the coming love in comparison with which all that we here know in respect to heart-love is but a germ, or a plant in its early years. There is such a sense of men's inner and higher life that their ordinary daily experience seems like a dream—like a tale that is told. When we are in a low estate,

we call higher visions reminiscences, and settle back again to that which we know and feel in its homelier and ruder forms, and say, "This is substantial. Whatever the body can help me to understand is real." But there are times when the spirit asserts its superiority, and recognizes that all those affections which are expressed by their bodily experiences partake of matter, and that the real higher life is that which is to be disembodied, disenthralled, and brought into a liberty, the largeness of which is not suspected here. There are times when men feel that the invisible and latent is far more to be received than the visible and disclosed; and that those things which are able to make an impression on the senses must in their nature be coarse and low, whereas those things that are unable to make any impression on the senses belong to a higher sphere, and can not be reduced to incarnation.

In these hours of musing, of inspiration, of imagination, if you choose to call it imagination, or of faith, if you choose to dignify it by calling it faith—in these hours it is that we look upon all our relationships on earth, not with indifference, not as if they were not real, but as if in some sense they were dreamy and visionary. . .

Of those who through sorrow and griefs have reached the high seats of wisdom, some there are who will tell you that in sorrow there is an experience like to that which I have spoken of as belonging to love or occupation. The reality, the power, and the dominion of sorrow no man disputes. In this life, the sorrows of the moral sentiment are crowned kings. Their crowns are iron. Midnight is in their eye. Awful sternness seems to be in their hearts. Men lie as victims in dungeons under the dominion of sorrow, and know not that in this strange way God prepares men for coronation, and that these stern-browed kings of misery are, after all, angels of mercy and of love.

Yet, as in storms, sometimes there are moments when the clouds part and let through the whole gush of the sun, and change in a moment the terror to sublime beauty; so, out of

anguish, often, the soul rises to a vision of the work which sorrow does for men, and of what is its real interior and after nature; and there comes a comprehension of the apostle's declaration, "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." And in these higher moods we look back upon sorrows as if they had been no sorrows.

Who remembers, when once his feet are upon land again, those weary storms that well-nigh rocked the life out of him but yesterday? How soon we forget the darkness and wretchedness of a life upon the sea when we are again on land, which God anchored fast so that it should neither swing nor swell! While men are in the midst of overflowing sorrows, those sorrows are more real to them than they deserve to be; but when they rise above their sorrows, and look down upon them, they seem so unimportant as not to be worthy of thought. By sorrow men learn that they need to be fed with higher food; that they must rest on stronger supports; that they must have other friends and friendships; that they must live another life; that there must be something that neither time, nor chance, nor accident can undermine and sweep away. When men have learned this interior lesson of sorrow, they look upon the trouble not as being less troublous than it was, but as, from the higher point to which they have risen, unreal and dreamy.

Thus in joy we learn to rejoice as though we rejoiced not. In sorrow we learn to weep as though we wept not. In marriage relations and the ecstatic enjoyments of social life we learn to live as though these were not the real things, but rather the prefiguring of them; as though we saw but the semblance here of that which we should realize hereafter. We learn, blessed and beautiful as is the present, to wait for the more glorious disclosure that is just beyond. We learn, as we dig, and build, and accumulate, to feel, not that there is not a reality in what we are doing, but that there is another reality which far exceeds what most men know; that

what men know is a semblance of something beyond; that it is a foretoken of other treasures, of the coming possessions and dominions of the soul. These present things become shadowy, not because we say to them "Be annihilated! Melt out of sight!" but because we say to them "Ye are prophecies"—and the word of prophecy is never so much as is the fulfillment itself.

Have we not, then, in these and like experiences, the interpretation of this sublime truth of the sacred Scriptures? The realities of life are not degraded by a consideration of their poorness, their faults, and their mingled sinfulness. But I doubt whether it is wise to look too often upon human life on the side of its squalor and misery. I should as soon think of looking, not at the gallery and library, nor at living men, but at the sewers of the city, and at the dead and decaying bodies of men, to know the power, and beauty, and glory of civilization, as of looking at society and at individuals on the evil side to know what belongs to their best estate. There is a strong attraction of like to like; and when we are ourselves morbid, bitter, vindictive, we see only how poor and untrustworthy men are; in looking upon the household, we see only a want of virtue and peace. There are those that will tell you that, after all, men are hollow and untrustworthy; that the household is a sham; that neighborhoods, and cities, and states are but decent devices to cover immense and ever-rolling imperfections, and miseries, and wickednesses.

Now there is enough of shortcoming, and of wrong, and of positive wickedness and meanness, but it does not follow that we are to search them out and hold them up for ourselves and others to gaze at. When a leaf drops and dies it goes down to mingle with the ground. When moss falls off it disappears. Every thing in nature, as it decays, hides itself. And so it should be in human life. All the ten thousand decaying imperfections in society we are as soon as possible to forget and cast under foot. We are to accustom our-

selves to look chiefly at that which is innocent, and beautiful, and aspiring, and in which are the possibilities of education. It is a bad thing for a man, in looking at himself, at his neighbors, and at communities, to look at the side of fault, and failing, and meanness, and imperfection, and wickedness, and rottenness. These things will force themselves upon his notice full enough—more than enough for his good.

It is, then, no part of the errand of the text to teach you to undervalue the present relations of life, nor to study those morbid aspects of its ignorance, its imperfections, or its sins, which lie so heavy on it. It is, on the contrary, to tell you that the experiences and joys of life are blessed realities—more blessed than you think. It comes not to tell you that friendship is not friendship, but to say to you, "Friendship is so really friendship that you do not begin to know it from what you have experienced of it." It says to the father and mother, not that the love which they bear to their children is no love, or worthless love, but that it is a love of which their experience is so minute that, when they come to see that that is the feeling with which God, in the amplitude of his infinite being, looks as a father upon human weakness, the affection which they bear to their children will, in this larger interpretation, seem as a shadow. It is to say to affianced hearts, not that the love which draws them together is a passion that burns for an hour and then goes into ashes; but to husband and wife, lover and friend, it says, "Love on: love is truer than men would make you think; it is richer; it is more potent. Your own experience of it does not tell you what it is, nor what it is to be. There is more to come. There will be an education and disclosure which will make that which men teach you to undervalue seem so divine and so omnipotent for joy that you will think the most ecstatic moods in this world are as if you loved not." This is a different process from undervaluing. It is to teach men the intense potency of things, to teach them to take all these elements of human experience as so many symbols, hints, and prophecies,

out of which is to grow, by-and-by, a fulfillment so much larger than is implied by the words of prediction that no man can at present determine what is the fullness of it.

In another way the Apostle John comes at the same truth, where he says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." As much as if he had said, "We are the sons of God; but do not imagine that the common meaning of the word *sons* can convey to you an idea of what God means when he calls you his sons. There is such a thing as being a son of God in a sense so much sweeter, and nobler, and more blessed than you would suppose there could be from any thing that you see on earth, that it does not appear by that language what we shall be." That is the argument of the apostle. It is the same style of reasoning as that which we find in this passage. You are to live as if all things here below were transient. You are not to rest in the things of this world as though you were satisfied with them. There is much that is good in the world, but you are not to seek it as ultimate good. Friendships and social relationships—these are not to be quibbled away; they are not to be stigmatized with sneering and cynical bitterness. Imperfect as they are, low as they are, weighed down as they are by human weakness and depravity, washed as they are by the mire as well as by the wave, you are to see in these things the germs of such glorious and eternal affections as shall make heaven unspeakably attractive and desirable to you.

You are to love, then, as though you loved not—as though the experience of this life was no measure of that to which you aspire, and to which you are going.

When our boys went forth to the war, how many went never to return! and how many hearts were carried with them that never came back again except broken! How many a maiden sat waiting after the battle, long, and long, and long, with tears that counted the seconds! How many sleepless nights were passed! At last hope deferred made the

heart of some maiden sick, and she consigned to darkness and an unknown grave him who was the light of her life, and who was to have been the leader and prophet of all her expected joy in the future. When all hope has gone, and all light with it, on a day that she looked not for, and by a hand that she knows not, there comes a letter. Her dimmed eyes will not let her read the superscription. Her heart is better than her head, and knows that it must be from him! It is but a little. "Mary, I have been imprisoned. I am escaped. This will be borne to you by a prisoner who escaped with me. I am on my way home. I shall be with you almost as soon as this." Where is he that can frame language for her overflowing love and thankfulness? What angel would not be glad to bear the thanksgiving of that virgin's heart before the throne of God, that its sweet perfume might be mingled with the praise of the saints? And how, as she thanks God, and her heart lives again in a glorious resurrection out of despair, does her soul look at that letter? The letter is nothing, and yet it has brought her to life again. That poor paper, that soiled page, those faint lines of ink—the feeling that they have produced is ten thousand times more precious than are they! And yet offer her now the diadem of a queen, the richest bracelet that eye ever rested on, for that letter, and how will she press it to her heart, and say, "Never—never!" It is sweeter than her life to her. But, compared with the feelings to which it gave rise, it is as if it was not. It is poor, low, mean, when measured by the state of soul which it has excited in the maiden's bosom.

And so of the various experiences and relationships of life. Out of them are to be unfolded such results, from them is to come such a higher life, and they are the prophets and foretokens of such amazing perfectness therein, that we may now, instructed of faith, well say with the apostle, "Let us live as though all these symbols of the life to come were but shadows and dreams."

The whole globe is but one symbol, and human life is a

prophetic literature; and nothing will so exalt the literal reality as such a view of the overhanging spiritual truth as shall make these literal things seem like a dream in comparison with the exceeding glory which they foretoken.

In view of this exposition and these illustrations, consider how the deepening and ennobling of human life depends, not on the idolatry of its present low estate, but on so employing its earthly letter as to descry what it is going to be.

Take love, the finest feeling, the most generous and self-sacrificing—for love and selfishness are incompatible. Love is as gold in the rock. The mountain is but stone, and the gold is rare and scarce, and is found in veins here and there. So in this life it is in loving. We are too proud, too coarse, too selfish, too ungenerous; we are not magnanimous enough. Love runs in veins through us; and we are to take the experiences of love when it is in its most perfect moments, in its ecstatic state, as it were purified gold, seven times purified and made clean—we are to take these as our ideal. Then we are to lift up, by the imagination, our conceptions to a state in which our character will turn on this feeling, not occasionally, but as an ordinary experience. Nay, we should rise up so completely into the influence of the purity and disinterestedness of this feeling as that it shall control all the other feelings, and harmonize them, till the conscience, and the reason, and the moral sentiments all are penetrated with the summer of love, as the whole atmosphere to-day is penetrated by the warmth, and fragrance, and beauty of nature. And when we have thus by loving raised the ideal of loving, that very ideal comes back to rebuke, to correct, to restrain. It does not diminish and undervalue love; it augments the value of it. It teaches us how small it is; how it should be developed; and how pure, how unselfish, how generous, how noble it ought to be.

Nothing else is a better guard against immoderation and the vulgarizing tendencies of business than that habit of mind which the apostle here indicates. We take business

too often as an ultimate end. We do not let it prophesy any thing to us. We see it in its mere letter, and not in its spirit. We do not consider it in its relations to society, nor as it stands connected with our future and eternal development. The wickedness of this world does not consist in this, that men are addicted to business, but in this, that they follow their business so incompletely; that they look at it only on the earth-side; that they fail to hear its testimony of higher things; that they stop on it as a thing sufficient in itself, whereas it is a symbol of things yet to come, that shall be higher, and nobler, and better than present things. So soon as a man is satisfied that there is higher wealth than this world affords; that his life consists not of the abundance of the things which he possesses, he is fitted to acquire wealth and administer it. No man is so fit to be a merchant, a mechanic, a shipmaster, a husbandman, an operator in any department of secular life, as that man who has learned to so look at the things of this world as to see their higher interpretation, their nobler revelations.

All the experiences which we have in our varied life of this habit of mind which the apostle enjoins, will tend not to destroy our conscious enjoyment in the present sources of innocent good, but to give us a finer joy. When the world is spiritually contemplated; when you connect it with the world to come; when you look at it from a high point of vision, it not only is not diminished in its revenues and treasures of joy, it becomes finer, sweeter, nobler.

Men, for the most part, do not know how to find the honey in the things of this world. You would never suspect where the honey of a flower is; or, if you did, too large is your hand to be thrust in to get it. But the insect buries itself in the flower, and then, with a prehensile instrument, far-reaching, searches the cells for the honey, and draws out the hidden stores. Its very fineness gives to it what your coarseness withholds from you. We are not fine enough to discover the joy that is hidden in many of the relations of this life.

So, too, cares, and disappointments, and anxieties, and fears, and consumings, such as waste life by various attrition, are forestalled and resisted by this habit of mind. And this is the meaning of that last clause—"they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away. For I would have you without carefulness." Not without occupation, not without duties, not without responsibilities, but without goading cares, without corrosive anxieties, without oppressive burdens, which come from duties that are hard to be performed. He that feels that his life here is but transient, and that his true life is coming to him; he that is used to looking down on this world by taking his stand-point above and beyond it, and is conscious of his power and dignity—he lives above those troubles and annoyances that one stumbles upon and falls headlong into who regards this life as all-important, and looks upon it from a low and earthly stand-point. The higher our conception of life, of character, of human destiny, the easier will life become. The purer your ambition, the nobler your animating motive, the more cheerfully will your lot in life be borne.

There is only one other application that I shall make of this view. It lifts us above those fluxes and refluxes of pain and suffering that come from grief. If you were to mourn every time that grief strikes out the light of intelligence, then there would not be one single moment of the round day that you would not be in tears. There is not an hour in which some heart is not breaking. As there is not one second in which there would not be heard the ticking of that clock in the steeple which is lifted up so far above the stir and bustle of life if it were not for the din and noise below, so there is not one moment in the apportionment of destiny in which some staff is not broken in the hand that leans on it; in which some wife is not made desolate; in which some mother is not left childless; in which some sister is not bereft of all that was dearest to her. There is not

a moment in which there are not hearts charging God falsely, and saying, "Thou art cruel." There is not a moment in which there are not dark waves passing over some souls about us, so that they might adopt the language of inspired writ, and say, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." There runs a chain of sorrow through time. The world groans and travails in pain.

Such thoughts as these passed through my mind yesterday, as, walking the sunny street, I pondered upon the departure of such a man as had just gone—Mr. Humphrey; upon the departure of such a man as went just before him—Mr. Odell, his predecessor in Congress; and upon the departure of others that I knew to be lying in the pomp, and state, and darkness of death.

Shall we then mourn? What is departing? What is dying? What is death? Is there any place where we need to stand more than by the side of the grave? And ought we not to learn, looking upon the sepulchre, to say, "Thou holdest only the physical body," and to mourn as though we mourned not; and, looking upon death, to say, "Thou, death, art thyself dead?" For is not dying as much a part of God's mercy as being born? When the apple-tree blossoms you laugh, and you do not cry when you pick the apple; but when man blossoms man laughs, and then, when God picks the fruit, he cries. Fool that understands so little! When will you recognize that which constitutes your highest good? Glorious is the hour when God says, "Come up hither;" and yet you look upon that hour with fear and dread.

Long before winter would let me plant out of doors, I planted under glass, and depended upon artificial heat, and waited for the time when I might remove my early plants. And, as soon as I dared, I set them in the open air in some sheltered nook where the frost should not touch them. But now, in these June days, I have taken them into the broad, exposed garden, and put them where they are to stand and blossom, and they did not weep when I put them there.

Now God has raised us under glass, and nurtured us there, that we might bear transplanting into another and better sphere; and when he comes, and takes us, and plants us out in his open garden, is that the time for us to cry? Beloved, ye are the sons of God; and when the bell strikes, and the angel, hearing the sweet sound, flies swiftly to call you to your sonship and coronation, is that the time for tears? Beloved, it doth not yet appear what ye are to be; and yet are ye so pure, and noble, and true that men can not bear your going from them? And are you lost because all the fragmentary developments of your being are taken into that higher sphere where they are more, not less?

Why, your child is not your child till you have lost him! That which you can put your arms about is that which you can not afford to love. No bird cries when the shell is broken and the birdling comes forth, or when, a little later, it leaves the nest, and wings its way through the air. Only mothers do that when their children, released from earth, fly away to a better world. And yet only they are worthy of immortal love that escape from the clog of this mortal state.

Now let us thank God, not that men die, but that they live. So far as it pleases God to develop and endow them, let us be glad; but when they go to a better realm, let us say, "Thank God they have gone where they shall be perfect; they have blossomed and are bearing fruit." Is not this the Christian way?

Ah! brethren, we are not Christians about dying. We are taught that we go to heaven through the prison of death. Every body feels that to sicken and die is to go into Egypt and into the wilderness. We are apt to think of sickness and dying as so many horrible, gloomy stages in our progress toward the future. But dying is a process as simple as the parting of the stem from the bough, or as the swinging of the door that lets one in from the wintry blast outside to the pleasant home inside. It is not hard to die. It is harder a thousand times to live. To die is to be a man. To live is

only to try to be one. To live is to see God through a glass darkly. To die is to see him face to face. To live is to be in the ore. To die is to be smelted and come out pure gold. To live is to be in March and November. To die is to find midsummer, where there is perfect harmony and perfect beauty.

Let us not mourn, then, as other men. Let us mourn as though we mourned not. Let us rejoice as though we rejoiced not. Let us work as though we worked not. Let us love as though we loved not. Let us feel that the life that is above is the only thing that is worthy of our thought and our striving. Living for God, for glory, and for immortality—that is life enough!

PRAYER.*

Our Father, we render thee our thanks that life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. No longer need we wander alone in the dust, and darkness, and blindness, longing after and having aspirations to discern what others have longed for and have not attained. No longer are we left lingering amid the mysteries and ignorance that have bewildered the minds of men in times past. Thou art the way and the life, and in thee and through thee we behold the glorious realities of the spiritual world—the heaven, the future, the realization of that for which we long. And we know that these inward strivings are of the Spirit, thus uttering things by us imperfectly conceived, and which alone we could not know until we experienced the witness of God sent to us through them; and away from home, and almost ignorant of our Parent or of our needs, thou dost by the Holy Ghost awaken in the soul longings again for the higher and better land; thou dost teach us to love thee; thou dost teach us how little estate there is in this life—of how little worth is every thing here; and dost teach us of the eternal life beyond, by thy Holy Spirit and Word; and thou, by thine own royal nature, dost love us—a Savior loving us indeed, and loving us forever, not alone according to the power or the measure of excellence in us, but according to the measure of our beauty when we shall stand arrayed before thee in the fullness of thy glory. Thou hast made all that which of old seemed dark or murky, trans-

* Offered at the funeral of Hon. James Humphrey.

parent and luminous to us. Joys are greater with us who walk in this light than with those who walked without it. Sorrows are no more, now, to us sorrowful. Thou hast taken away from us the bitter pangs that have afflicted us, in giving strength to those of us that are weary, and comfort and consolation to those of us that are sorrowing and in disappointment. We are enabled to rejoice in infirmities, and to wear them as a badge of triumph. These things, which men aforetime have called misfortunes, and grievous burdens, and calamities, we bear with fortitude through faith in Christ. We find our life and our faith come up in the presence of sorrow; all its griefs, mortifications, and self-diffidences are taken away, and he gives us to feel that we have, wrought in us, the hope of glory. And now, O Lord Jesus, we thank thee that there are so many witnesses to this blessed work—to these truths which thou hast revealed to us in the Word, and that thou hast so far transformed, and art still transforming, the ordinary course of human experience that we walk not as other men—for to us, in our experience, death is not the victor, but the captive. Sorrows that are around and about the Christian are no longer victorious. These tears that we shed are but as dew-drops that fall in the night, to make all things more beauteous in the morning. We render thee thanks, O thou blessed Savior, for this power of thy love and this inspiration of faith. We are to-day gathered here, O Lord, to weep and to rejoice, to be glad in sorrow, to speak somewhat of our loss, but more of our gain. We thank thee for thy servant's life and ministrations; we thank thee that thou hast thus sealed again thy covenant with parents, and that thou hast caused them to remember that they may rear a child in the way he should go, and it shall not be in vain. We thank thee that in him the virtues of his ancestors have been made manifest and augmented. The prayers of father and mother have not been in vain, and the early consecration came early in abundant fruit and blessing upon him who was the object of it. We thank thee for his gentleness, for his meekness, and for his humility. We thank thee for all in him that won men to admiration and to love; and that he bore these gifts of beauty and grace, not for himself, but for others. We thank thee that thou didst give him clearness of perception and firmness of conscience, and that in the midst of political influences, and in commercial connections, he maintained a generous and disinterested character; that he so walked before men as to show them that men could be firm and not harsh, that one could be full of love and yet strong.

We thank thee for this testimony that he has borne for Jesus, and has left for us to profit by. We thank thee that in public affairs he was a witness and an example for us—that in public affairs, where men are so carried about by currents of selfishness and ambition, he discharged all his duties to his friends, his party, his country, and his God, and maintained a name and character bright and spotless; a memory pure in the sight of men. We thank thee that thou hast given our young men an example, showing that a man can succeed, and be true, and pure, and unselfish; that manhood in the Lord Jesus Christ is consistent with worldly prosperity. For all this which thou hast presented unto us, we render thee thanksgiving. And yet how much more have we to praise thee for —for that store of wealth that he has left to the household—for the power and beauty of that love to those who may speak henceforth, not of their loss, but rather of his infinite gain—for being assured that he now enjoys the highest glories around the throne of God. For his truth, and pureness, and gentleness, and love, which built the house of his affections, we thank thee; for that which thou didst make him by a discipline of suffering—it is thy work, O Lord God of his fathers, and to thy name be all the praise. We thank thee that thou hast made it to appear in his life how easy it is to gain the victory over bodily infirmities; that thou hast rebuked our oft-repeated repinings at the voice and call of disease and pain; that thou didst make him steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; and in the midst of the sea, in the waves that seemed going over him, in the long period of darkness and suffering, that thou didst give him songs in the night, and caused him to rejoice. This is thy work, O Lord God of his fathers, and to thy name we give the praise. And now thou hast taken him to thyself, and we are glad, and heartily give thanks that he shall not wear this body in darkness and suffering any more. Thou hast completed the work for which thou sentest him into life, and hast called him back again, after long waiting, to be blessed, with a crown, and song, and eternal rest. Thou art glorified; heaven is happier; new victories speak forth, and new graces, and a new element, in that harmonious love around thy throne. The flood is passed; the winds are behind; no darkness shall ever know him more; his day of triumph has come, his period of probation is ended. For him is henceforth only the rising of that glory as a star that shall know no setting in the nobler firmament above. For his translation to glory, Lord God of his fathers, we thank thee.

Be pleased to remember those to whom, on earth, thou hast given so great a blessing. Remember them still. Thine handmaiden—thou didst love, and comfort, and sustain those women that knew thee when on earth; thou didst remember them; thou didst know the very heart of woman; thou didst know pain, and bore it with all its extremity of suffering; be pleased to do thine office work here, and whatever is meant for her in this affliction beyond the interpretation of our finite minds, *whatever* is meant for her in this affliction, put comfort and consolation into her heart. Lord, draw near to her, and let her feel, by day and by night, that Christ thinks of her and loves her. And be near, O Lord, to his dear children; and may they not, in these moments of greatest grief, in the tempest of affliction, forget how he hath builded up their whole life; how rich they are in Christian memories; how full is that example of religion that he hath given them in time past, which is for them for all time to come! May they by faith and patience walk in the same path, trusting in the same Savior, since every thought wings them nearer to him, and every day brings them one step farther on. Grant, we beseech thee, thy blessing to those that are connected with his household in various relations. Grant, we beseech thee, all that consolation that they need, and all the sanctifying influence which we so earnestly beseech in their behalf. Lord God, draw near to those that are afflicted as parents, and are full of sorrow. Lift the whole burden of their sorrow from them. Speak to the brothers and the sisters. Let them know that it is the voice of Jesus speaking to them out of the gates of the City of Life. And grant to all thy blessing—most to those that need most; to all that are in pain. Grant that impression to them of the Holy Ghost, in which, by faith, they shall see beyond this earthly experience, and be enabled to rise where he is, and from that luminous vision behold his departure as he now beholds it, and show their love by mingling, in a degree, their sympathy with his, and joining with him in that glorious realm in which he walks, crowned and royal, in his Father's kingdom. Blessed Savior, sanctify this dispensation of affliction and this triumph of thy servant—this going forth which has made his whole life seem blessed to us. Sanctify it to all those who were his companions in the discharge of public trusts, and all that counseled with him; to all those that labored with him in public affairs. Sanctify it to his church and its pastor; to all the brothers that have prayed and sung with him in days gone by. May this day be made rich by its gain in heavenly truth to us.

We beseech of thee that every thing which added strength and grace to him, and which made him fittest for heaven, may be approved to our judgment, and may we follow the example left us, waiting for the time when some blessed angel shall be commissioned to call for us, and men shall say, "He is not, for God took him." Hear us in these things, and answer us, we beseech thee, for the sake of Christ Jesus; and to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shall be the praise forevermore. Amen.

XX.

On the Decadence of Christianity.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, July 21st, 1867.

On the Decadence of Christianity.

"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."—1 Cor., i., 22-24.

Whether Christianity has run through its period of power, and is to fall back, as the Mosaic economy did, is now a question much pondered and discussed. Was Christianity an intermediate stage of development? Was it an outgrowth of the human soul in such a sense that it was relative to the times, and the nations, and the influences which surrounded it? or was it based upon absolute truth? Was it truth in such a sense divine that it was interjected into the world long before the period when it could have been developed out of the human understanding in the normal course of education, and is it, therefore, permanent and universal?

I propose to argue this morning that Christianity is not a system of relative truths; that in its nature it can not wane; that it is destined, not to be supplanted, but to enlarged power, and to continuous triumphs to the end of time.

Consider, then, the text. "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after philosophy; but we," as distinguished from both, "preach Christ crucified." A king without a crown is in symbol no king; and the apostle felt that, unless *cross* or *crucifixion* was attached to the name of Christ, he was not king. It was not merely Christ that he preached, but Christ *crucified*—Christ the sufferer. And then he proceeds to say, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stum-

bling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called"—unto them which are capable of rising into the true spirit of it—"both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the philosophy of God."

That last phrase is remarkable. The word is the same that had been used in the context, and that is used throughout the New Testament to designate Grecian philosophy—*sophia*. The Jews wanted a sign or wonder, that is, a miracle, and the Greeks wanted philosophy; but the apostle says, I preach Christ crucified; and this, in its full disclosure, is at once the highest element of divine power and of divine philosophy. It is the succoring God incarnated, that concentrates in himself the highest moral energy and the deepest philosophy—the philosophy which shall prevail when all others shall have passed away—the true philosophy of the human race, whose development is found in the Lord Jesus Christ—God manifest in the flesh, suffering, and crucified.

There are one or two influences now prevailing which tend to produce the impression that the power of Christ is waning in society; that the system of truth which has clustered about the name of Christ is a purely human development, and subject to such curtailment, and modifications, and final suppression as all relative and partial truth is liable to. Let us consider some of the influences which have tended, and still are tending, to produce this impression.

1. Christianity has been confounded with the *doctrinal forms* which it has assumed. I find no fault with those that attempt to throw the facts of Christianity into a doctrinal form. The process is inevitable. But then, one should not confound his philosophic rendering or solution of facts with the facts themselves. One should not confound Christianity with the purely human process of *reasoning upon* the facts of Christianity. This has been largely done, and for a variety of reasons that I have not time now to consider. But religious doctrinal systems will change after every great development in the philosophy of the human mind. They have

changed hitherto, they are changing, and they will continue to change, because they are the result of mere human reasonings. Controversies that seemed to good men to threaten the very destruction of Christianity, we can now see, as we look back upon them in history, only set Christianity, as a spirit, as a power, as a divine philosophy, free from the cerements that had been wrapped around it by the imperfection of human reason.

Now when, in any age, careless men, who have confounded the spirit of Christ and of Christianity with the human doctrines of religion, see those doctrines attacked and modified, it is not strange that they should say, "Religion is passing away." But the external form that a principle assumes may change without in the slightest degree changing the principle itself.

2. Christianity has been confounded with the *instruments* through which it has acted on this world. As a pure truth, it is impossible that Christianity should be universally and continuously powerful. It raised up for itself, therefore, institutions. The Church is one of them. Those institutions were relatively adapted to nationalities, to the civilizations of the world, to the necessities of the times in which they were developed. All forms of religious associations — the vehicles through which religious influence has been brought with power upon the world—are apt to be confounded with religion itself. There are a great many men who think the Bible is religion, because it is an instrument through which religion is kept in and made known to the world. There are many men who think that Sunday is religion, because it is one of those instruments by which God brings to bear upon the world the great interior truths of Christ. Many persons suppose that the ministers of the Church represent religion, because they are instruments employed in producing religious effects.

Now, not undervaluing instruments, which are indispensable in this world, we are never to confound religion itself

with the ordinances and institutions, the books and sermons which it employs. These are separate from the thing itself, just as much as my hand is separate from my mind, though it is the indispensable instrument of the mind in working any manual craft. My whole body is the instrument which my mind employs, but my mind is something separable from my body, interior, and not perishable like the body.

Christianity is a soul-power—an invisible, immutable power in the world. It employs ordinances and organizations; and men properly change and modify them from age to age according to the exigencies of the civilization that exists; but religion does not change because its instruments do. Justice employs at one period of the human race one kind of laws. At another period, justice changes those old laws and employs others. Laws change from generation to generation, and from nation to nation, not for the sake of destroying public welfare, but for the sake of maintaining it. The vehicles and instruments of religion are changing, but the spirit and the letter are never to be confounded.

3. Christianity has been incorrectly identified with mere *morality and philanthropy.* It has undertaken to inspire morals, to refine manners, to elevate justice, to purify love, to ennoble governments, and to civilize the world as well as to save it. In attempting this, mistakes have been made. Corruptions have entered in. Men have confounded the Spirit of Christ with the very imperfect, and often perverse and ruinous application of religion to civil affairs and to political economy.

Because the wrongs which the people of Europe are resenting and correcting have been closely identified with the Church, they are thought to proceed from religion. Religion is not hurt, but helped by the revolution of hierarchies and the destruction of state churches.

Undoubtedly Christianity has leavened these various elements of civil society, but religion is not to be identified with the imperfect materials upon which it works, and still less

with the imperfect workers by whom it is administered. Is the sun identical with all the things which it does? The seasons change. Does the sun that produces them? Vegetation comes and goes. Is the autumnal perishing of summer growths the sign of decadence and weakness? The sun evokes, and nurses, and matures a whole continent of growths, but is there no difference between the sun that produces these effects and the effects themselves? and may not all the works of the sun perish, and it not change?

4. Another element that may perhaps come under this head is the popular estimate of the Bible. Formerly the Bible was regarded as an encyclopædia—as a guide to all knowledge. Devout men have sought for authority in texts for every phase of conduct. The impression has prevailed that there was no element in life for which there was not some authoritative direction in the Word of God. It is true that indirectly the Bible touches every human interest; but it is not an encyclopedia, nor a universal text-book of knowledge. By enlightening the understanding, purifying the conscience, and changing the heart, truth prepares men for every function and department of life. But the Bible only attempts to touch the master-springs of character, and so to set men right with God, with themselves, and with their fellow-men. Having done that, it leaves them to work out the details of the various departments of life themselves.

If men suppose that the Bible is a book of universal instruction, then the growth of medical science, putting to shame any knowledge found in the sacred Scriptures on this subject, will very soon assert itself as its rival; civil treatises will by-and-by become rivals of its early and artless institutions of justice, and treatises on sociology will show how meagre and poor is the form of social economy which it shadows forth. But the Bible never undertook to teach sociology, or medicine, or engineering, or political economy, or politics. It undertakes to reconcile man's soul with his God. It undertakes to put the spiritual reason on its right plane, that it may

exert a right influence. Its office may be compared to a key which winds up a machine that has run down. It develops and puts in order that of which God gives the creative idea, that it may more perfectly perform its organic functions. It undertakes to bring man where he shall be qualified for all the duties of life. It does not undertake to teach every thing that men do in the light; it merely furnishes them *light* to do what their circumstances and necessities require to be done. The Word of God is bread. Bread does not undertake to reap the harvest, or plow the field, or blast the rock, or delve in the mine, or fish in the sea, but it makes a man strong so that *he* can do it. The Word of God is light. It gives a man the medium necessary to enable him to exercise his faculties correctly. If men suppose that the Bible is designed to impart universal knowledge, then the growth of science will naturally produce the impression that it is a worn-out book; and men will say, "What can the Bible tell us about the important duty of voting? What can it tell us with regard to electricity, that is playing so great a part in the economies of society? What can it tell us about any of the great elements of philosophical research or modern inquiry?" It does not undertake to touch those subjects. It implies that moral elements are the master elements of the human soul; that when they are developed and rightly trained, the whole mass will go rightly; and the Bible essays simply to inspire and guide the moral centres of the mind.

"That is narrowing the Bible, and bringing it within a very small compass." I beg your pardon; it is not narrowing it at all. Is not the key that winds the clock the most important thing that you can bring to the clock? Is not the clock helpless without it? It is a little thing, it goes into a small hole, and in turning it makes but little noise; but, after all, it controls the whole economy of the clock. The clock is wound up by it. Now the Bible is the key that winds up, and sets in motion, and regulates all human life and conduct.

A man says, "I own all the water that has been brought into Brooklyn, and distributed through all the mains of the city." "Ah!" says another man, "I own more than that; I own Ridgewood reservoir, whence you get it all." "Ah!" says a third, "I own more than that; I own all the land from which the water comes that fills Ridgewood reservoir." "Ah!" says still another, "I own more than that; I own all the clouds that rain down the water." One man more steps in and says, "I own more than that; I own that constitution of nature by which water is formed in the air, and by which it rains down." Has not he got behind and beyond them all? Is not all that they own comprehended in that great, comprehensive, organizing fact? And so the power of Christ goes back of all originating and formative powers to their very source. It not only antecedes and antedates all other power, but surpasses all other power in quality.

5. There are many who seem to have the impression that the developments of science in our time, in mental philosophy, in sociology, in civil government, in political economy, in natural history, in all those elements which show the divine conception in the development of the physical world, are superseding Christianity. They speak of religion with respect. They say that it has done an admirable work; that it has filled an interregnum; that before we could come to these higher knowledges, it was an invaluable aid to human development; that it deserves all honor; that there are many elements in it which ought to be preserved; but they hold that it is to be dispossessed by the developments of science. On the other hand, my own belief is that science is itself, however reluctantly in its first strides, ultimately to come round into perfect subjection to the law that is in Christ Jesus; and he that has ruled over priests, over kings, and over nations for ages past, is just as much in days to come to rule over laboratories, and lecture-rooms, and professional chairs, and all that belongs to scientific knowledge. In our day there is apparent collision, seeming discrepancies;

but they are only apparent. Or, if they are real discrepancies, it will be found that they lie in that human element which has been wrapped around the exposition of religion. Religion itself, set free from imperfect human handling, is to emerge and be brighter than it ever was before, because it will be purer.

Let us consider, then, some of those grand elements which constitute Christianity—inquiring, as we proceed with the enumeration of them, whether there is any sign of their growing weak; whether the elements themselves are in the nature of transient elements; whether there is any token that their function is exhausted; whether they can be adjourned, prorogued, or superseded.

The first grand characteristic element of the Gospel is the new presentation which is made of the divine character, and of God's peculiar relations to the individual soul. This is not only the first and most striking element of Christianity, but it is its most important element. At the coming of Christ there had been developed in the world the conception of God as a God of justice, and wisdom, and power, and truth, and goodness. There had been developed the idea of a regnant God, a God in dominion, a God to be worshiped and obeyed, to be feared and to be loved. But there was one peculiar element which, although it had been foreshadowed, had never been disclosed in such a manner as to become a universal conception, a working power—the element of divine love-suffering. In all the world outside of the Jewish Church, the conception of suffering in a God was perfectly abhorrent. I will not say that in the Jewish idea of the divine nature the conception of suffering was abhorrent; but it was obscure, little understood, and scarcely at all felt. Christianity brought into the world the idea that God, sitting in the centre of perfectness, himself in all conceivable elements without bounds and beyond the possibility of change in order to perfection, was of such a disposition that he was willing to subject himself to toil, to trouble, to sorrow, to suffering for his creatures.

When it is said that God can suffer and does suffer, thousands are shocked. One of the most potential arguments that act upon men's minds in considering the question of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ is that it was unworthy of the dignity of a God, who is supposed to be the sum of all perfectness, to suffer. Now that God should suffer in any way that indicated moral obliquity; in any way that indicated that he had violated laws; in any way that indicated that he had not the wisdom and the power to avoid those courses which lead to suffering—in short, in any such way as implied weakness, or imperfectness, or impurity, is abhorrent to our fundamental notions of Deity. But that One who is the perfect God; who is without variableness or shadow of turning; who is the Creator of all sentient beings that, beginning at the seminal point, work their way up from weakness to strength; and who, during the long period in which they are subject to temptations, and are perpetually falling into sin, is universal father and universal mother—represents, in other words, those elements which are more perfectly shown to us in father and mother than in any other form—that such a One should be a sufferer; that he should bestow painstaking and care upon men; that he should put his experience in the place of their inexperience, and his love in the place of their hate; that he should pour out his soul for them as a universal inspiration and power; that he should do these things notwithstanding men are poor, and mean, and debased, and wicked, and ungrateful, and proud, and selfish; and that he should do it, not by virtue of any arrangement or plan, but on account of the inherent and everlasting qualities of the divine character—this is an astounding revelation! It revolutionizes the former notions of divine character. It struck at the foundations of Greek reasoning on the subject of perfection in Deity.

Christianity tells us that there is in God that element which makes him self-sacrificing, self-abnegating; that there is that in him which leads him to suffer, not on account of any relation of his own obedience or disobedience to law, but that he may

lift up the low, strengthen the weak, enlighten the ignorant, save the lost. This is the great revelation of the New Testament. It is what Paul meant when he said, "I will preach *Christ* and him *crucified*. I will not preach Christ the Son of God; I will preach *Christ and his cross*. I will not preach the crowned Savior, unless it be *the thorn-crowned;* I will not preach Christ upon the throne, living forever in the plenitude and beauty of eternal youth, and pomp, and power infinite; I will preach *the despised, the rejected, the blood-sweating Christ of Gethsemane, the cross-borne Christ upon Calvary*. That is the Christ that I will preach." He it is that is "the power of God and the wisdom of God." Why? Because there is a material medicinal effect produced by him upon the soul? No! but because God is disclosed in him as one that, for the poor and needy, for sinners, for his enemies even, gave forever and forever of the very substance of his being and love, and revealed himself to be a nourishing God and Father! And any man who has once had his soul penetrated with a conception of the immensity of God in his aspect of suffering for others has realized what the apostle preached. It is not only the philosophy of the universe, but it is the power of God in his soul to salvation. I do not believe that any man who has had that conception of God ever lost it. There is an energizing moral power produced by it which, when it is brought upon the soul, can neither be effaced or forgotten.

Is that first great element—the suffering of God—burned out? Has the world drawn out of it all its moral nutriment? Must that truth lie fallow? As yet the truth has shined almost wholly into darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. The amazing power of love developed by the story of love-suffering in God has yet dawned but as a twilight. The effulgence of this great truth, this central orb in the heavens and the earth, has scarcely yet risen above the horizon. It will be ages, I think, before it shines full upon the world. Men talk about the seed having spent itself be-

fore it has fairly sprouted. But I believe this wonderful divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, as representing God suffering for the creatures under his government, is yet to have its history; that it is in its initial period, and that there are vast stages of development through which it is to pass in long cycles of coming days; and yet men talk about Christianity being worn out! You might as well talk about the acorn that has grown but five years being an almost spent oak, when you know that hundreds of years of battling storms will yet thunder against its rugged health.

Look at the next element that is characteristic of Christianity, namely, its implications or direct teachings in respect to the character and condition of man. The assumption of the New Testament is that men by nature are animals. The scriptural use of the word *flesh* in the New Testament writings indicates that men by nature are living in the animal condition. And it is taught that in that condition it is not possible for them to understand higher truths, nor to feel higher influences, nor to enter into the experience of those regal joys which belong to a man when he is developed in his higher faculties. It is declared every where in the New Testament — not so much declared as assumed — that the heart is sinful. The apparent fact that the whole creation groans and travails in pain is argument enough on that subject. The tears, the sorrows, the sufferings of men, which we behold on every hand; the conflicts of the whole world, of which we are cognizant — these things make it evident enough that men are sinful. When a machine is out of order, and the various parts grate and grind against each other, it is not necessary to say to one who hears the grinding, "It is out of order." Therefore no time is spent in the New Testament to prove that men are depraved. It is assumed to be a thing of universal consciousness—as it is.

But there is a declaration that is marvelous, though it is less remarkable to us than it was to those to whom it was made, namely, that this state of sinfulness may be reversed,

and men reconstructed—"born again," as it is said. Right after the declaration of the loving, and self-sacrificing, and suffering nature of God, comes this declaration in respect to universal human sinfulness, that it is possible for men to break away from it utterly and immediately. The declaration that although men in the animal conditions of life tend to go on and repeat their degrading thoughts, and feelings, and habits, yet that there comes in a law of the Gospel which traverses this otherwise natural tendency; that it is in the power of men, under the divine influence, to stop bad moral processes, and to rear a new class of experiences; that as, where a soil is growing weeds, and nothing but weeds, if you will prepare the ground, and put in good seed, germinant elements will be thrown up which will supplant the weeds, so the human soul, though if it be left to its animal conditions will repeat its depravities, yet, inspired by the divine mind, has in it the power of sovereign change; that men may every where, high and low, black and white, bond and free, savage and civilized, ignorant or enlightened, without regard to class, emerge from their sinful state; that such is the universal condition of the human soul that it can, under the stimulating influence of God's Spirit, be lifted from the sphere of the brute creation into the realm of spiritual beings—this is one of the most original and most potential of all truths. That in this universal race of man, beggarly, miserable, selfish, proud, hating, and hateful, there is inherent, under the divine influence, the power of recreation, counting the past as nothing, balancing the old bankrupt books, shutting them up, and laying them aside all settled, without money and without price, throwing them away where the memory even shall not find them, with no harassing debt, and no frowning creditor—is not this a transcendent thing to tell? Because it is told so often, because it is so frequently repeated, it does not make much impression upon those who hear it. Nobody seems to think there are earthquakes and revolutions in it; but there are. Nobody seems to think it is a part

of the "power of God and the wisdom of God;" but it is. Not the thunder that cracks and rolls through the mountains, not the summer storms that sweep across the earth, not the volcano and the earthquake, are for prodigiousness of power to be compared with this simple annunciation, "Ye must be born again." *Must?* take out that word, and say, with tears of gratitude, "We *can* be born again!"

There is no other truth so full of hope as this. Men think it a hateful truth. Men argue as though it was slandering human nature. It is slandering human nature just as it is slandering human nature when it is said of a drowning man that some kind hand, placed under him, drew him to the shore. There is salvation in it!

Now, is that truth worn out? The truth of the salvation of men—call it by any name you please—that elasticity, that constitutional element, by which the soul, when brought under God's influence, can break away from the animal in him, from all the clogs which bind him down to lower things, and rise to higher realms, and become a man in Christ Jesus—is that worn out?

Not only is there some room yet for the application of this sovereign truth of Christianity, and some need of it, but there is no sign that age or weakness has passed upon it. The regenerating power of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of sinful men is a truth neither decrepit nor shrunken. It is as fresh as rains, as the sun, as the spring after long winters!

Consider, next, some of the grand ideals which are presented in the Gospel of Christ, and ask yourselves whether those which are peculiar to it are worn out and passing away. Ask yourselves whether, instead of being relative, they do not partake of the nature of the absolute.

The first is the doctrine of immortality. This truth of life and immortality, which were brought to light in Christ Jesus, had been before believed in a doubting way. It had been in the world as a suggestion, as a hint, as a rumor, one might say, but never as a power.

You are a poor man, and ignorant. There is a written document lying in a chest in your room. You can not read writing, and you do not know what that document contains, but you have a suspicion that by it you might become the inheritor of great treasure. You take it out, and look at it, and vainly wish that you could read it; you put it back without gaining any knowledge of its purport. By-and-by some kind friend comes to your relief. A light is kindled in your dwelling, and that document is taken out; he examines it for you. He reads, and as he reads, grows more and more attentive. He stops to ask you, "Who was your father? who was his father? what was your uncle's name?" "Something concerning my uncle, my father, and my father's father?" you say. You are impatient to know what it is. But, instead of telling you, he turns the paper over again, and says, "Well, well!" Unable longer to restrain your eagerness to know what are its contents, you say to him, "Tell me what it is. Do not hold me in suspense. What is the news?" At length he says, "Why, sir, do you know that that whole estate is yours? Here is your title. I have brought it out of its hiding-place. This is the will. The evidence is unquestionable. You are a millionaire. Your poverty is gone." "Read the paper again. Is it so—that I own that estate?" The man reads it again; you are assured that you are heir to the property. Your neighbors hear the news, and tell it to others; presently it is known through the whole town; great is the rejoicing that you have come to your rights at last!

The world had heard whispers of immortality. There had been fables and pictures, cloud-pictures, and fables grotesque or fantastic. Christ came, and opened God's will, as it is revealed in the New Testament, and made known the love—the suffering love of God. Men began to listen to his glorious teachings. "All that is God's is yours. By faith you may become his sons. You are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. All that God owns you shall inherit, of joy,

of power, of nobleness, of dignity, of society, of existence throughout eternity." Such is the revelation. Sound the musical word! Proclaim to all nations and generations the glad tidings that forever and forever man shall live!

Is this doctrine of immortality, of eternal existence, worn out? Is it passing away? Has weakness struck through it? Has it now no stimulation and hope? Has the world no longer any need of it? Are we to wrap up these great truths of the Godhead and of human nature as one would wind up a bundle of raiment worn out and lay them aside? When your soul is sick, and you fain would be better, will you turn away the physician if he comes? Where will you get your medicines if not from him? And what medicines will reach your case if not this truth of immortality? Where, outside of the Gospel, can you point me to one single ray of hope or joy comparable thereto? The revelations of natural science are important, but of what value compared with the revelation of God's inmost disposition? Who is my God? Where is he? Where can I find him? What am I myself? What is my destiny? Is the grave the end of time? Is the life of the flitting midge of evening, or of the poor foolish moth that extinguishes himself in my taper, a symbol of my life, except that mine is a little longer? Is there naught of me but dust, that shall return to dust? Every fibre in me, all the faculties of my being, and with more and more emphasis and power as they rise in the scale, declare that I can not sleep forever! And if it is said on good authority that I have in Christ Jesus immortality, I clasp that truth as the very bosom of God, full of milk. The sweetest, the most nourishing, the most hope-inspiring, the most regenerating doctrine, the doctrine that is most noble in its influences on the human character, is this doctrine of immortality — the cardinal truth that the soul lives forever through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Tell me, then, is this truth stricken in years and infirm? Does it limp or go on crutches? It is crowned yet; and all the signs of authority and power are upon it.

The next ideal held up before men in the Word of God is the great element of LOVE, which, as it is God's law to himself, is made our law too. Love carries in it those elements on which man's character is to be reconstructed. It embraces in itself, in a condensed form, the sum of all the other godlike qualities in the human soul. It is the perfection of all the faculties that lie below it. It is the fulfilling of the law—not of ceremonies, but of the human mind. Love is the very harmony of perfect being. In it will be found, in more perfect condition than when acting separately, reason, justice, and imagination! Love is the condition of the whole being when aroused to full activity, in perfect harmony, and all concentrated and pointing to the production of happiness in others.

"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." This, and a hundred like golden sentences, all the way through the New Testament, syllable this grand truth of love. Love is to be the germinant point of reconstructed character. And in you, as in your God, love is to be of such a nature that it will bear with others, and seek to benefit others.

Is the period drawing near when love is to die as a thing worn out? Has science so nourished and fed the human soul that it has risen to some higher sphere, above and beyond the need of love? Or does this very marrow of the New Testament fill the bones of the world with health and strength?

But there is a mood of love so peculiar and beautiful, and in a sense so eminent the product of Christianity, that it deserves a special mention. It is SELF-DENIAL. So indispensable is this virtue, that without it, in some degree, society would be but a den of ravening beasts.

It is an inflection or mood of love. And as love was provided and designed in the very structure of the human soul, so in a low and imperfect way—in a way of germ and rudiment—Nature teaches the great need of self-denial.

But Christ by his words, and yet more sublimely by his sufferings, has taught the world a royal lesson of self-denial which can not die out of it until the sun refuses to cheer the day, and the stars forget to shine upon the night. It constitutes an integral element of Christianity. If the world has outgrown Christianity, then it has outgrown love, suffering love, self-denial!

Has the world seen the ascendency of self-denial—all men giving preference to the higher moral elements, all men denying the fleshly lusts, all men cheerfully suffering that they might bring good to each other? Do the strong no longer lord it over the weak? Is wealth a servant of poverty? Is refinement the teacher of rudeness? Is that example of him "who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich," no longer solitary and peculiar, but become so much a part of universal daily life that self-denial is a stale and shriveled thing of the past, while the young world, having sucked all the wine out of it, is lustily going on to something higher than Christianity and beyond it?

Have individuals, and families, and groups of families, and communities, and states, and nations so long practiced *self-denial* in pleasure, in business, in civil affairs, that nothing more is to be learned, and is the New Testament now become the horn-book of a primary school, to be thrown aside by a world that has learned its letters and passed on to a higher literature?

There are men who seclude themselves from the world, and refuse to go into the active spheres of life, that they may preserve themselves from contamination and from sin, and they are pointed out to me as representing the ideal of Christianity. Why, you might as well bring me a stick twenty years old of seasoned oak wood, and tell me that that represented a forest! Where are the leaves? Where is the sap? Where are the singing birds? Where is there any thing that likens it to a forest? Away with your stick! Bring me

none of these old disbranched, leafless, sapless things called monks, or Shakers, or whatever other name you choose to put upon them, nor tell me that they represent the plenitude, and power, and saliency of the divine nature in all the ranges of society, now once again realized in human experience. I will have none of these for my ideal! A man keyed to love, made pure and powerful by it, putting himself among men, and under them, weeping for them, saving their tears by shedding his own, inspiring and leading the way, seeking, in love and suffering, for others to follow the Lord Jesus Christ—such a man represents what I conceive to be the Christian ideal.

Now tell me whether this idea has lost power and function in this world. Is Christianity waning, either in its God, or in the great facts that disclose him to men, or in those elements which are represented in the New Testament as ideals of reconstructed human character? The spirit of Christianity is alive yet, though its instruments may be passing away or changing.

I meant to have presented one other thought under this head, but I shall merely announce it, namely, that in the present condition of the world, it is difficult to find examples of what is meant by true Christian character. I know it is said that we are having as good men now as there ever were. Point out to me a man like Paul. I would make a pilgrimage around the globe to see him. Point out to me a man like Christ. I would make a pilgrimage round the universe to see him—whom I shall see for myself!

Oh! tell me, has this august purity, this sweet simplicity, this transcendent wisdom, this wondrous love, this sympathetic mind, that moved among men while not of them; that was so connected with them, not by passion, but by sentiment, and that waked hope in the bosom of corruption, so that publicans and harlots followed him, at last saying in their darkened souls, "A great light hath risen upon us"—tell me, has this divine nature no longer any function on the earth?

Even skeptics bow down before the name of Jesus; and men that reason away the authenticity, and authority, and power of the New Testament begin by confessing that human history has never set up, nor poetry nor fiction imagined any character so perfect as the character of the Lord Jesus Christ; and is that book likely to die out of the world which has in it the bright consummation of the highest conceptions of royalty in beauty, love in suffering, and purity in power?

In view of this exposition thus far, let us make a few applications. It is a subject difficult to deal with, because there is so much of it. Christian character in all its relations is so broad that the discussion of the entire question would be encyclopædic, and I can only touch upon a few salient points, which will serve as hints to give you some conception of the whole.

1. If you distinguish between the vehicle and the thing which it conveys, if you distinguish between the embodying element and the thing embodied, then there is one part of Christianity that may be said to be growing old, namely, that part which comprises its instruments. I think I shall not be misunderstood. For instance, there are many parts of the New Testament which have grown old—the miracles have. They were meant to be local and temporary. Their power was substantially expended on the day they were performed. And at every successive generation, as men have developed in reason and moral sense, and become able to gain, by the appropriate use of their now educated faculties, a knowledge of the truths which miracles are wrought to authenticate, miracles have become less needful. They were designed to produce certain moral conditions before men could come to them by a normal process of the understanding. And no man since the time of Christ has ranked miracles so low in the moral scale as Christ did. He often refused to perform them when asked to do so, and strove to lift men above their desire for such material evidences, preferring

that they should believe him for his work's sake. If, however, a man must have a wonder rather than an argument, he wrought the miracle, but in a way that he should feel that it was an appeal to the very lowest form of moral sense. Miracles are none the less to be believed now than formerly, but their authority and power wanes with the lapse of time.

There is a large part of the New Testament (for instance, almost the whole book of Hebrews) devoted to an argument intended to detach the Jew from the Jewish religion without detaching him from the core of that religion—immortality in God. But we are not Jews. We never did believe the Jewish doctrine. We never worshiped as they did, nor sacrificed, nor had a priesthood like that of Aaron. We were brought up from the cradle in the faith of Christ. To us those arguments are empty, except as histories of other men's difficulties.

There is much, therefore, in the New Testament that is relative, but it is only the exterior forms of truth, the vehicles of it. That which constitutes the essential elements of the Gospel; that which relates to the nature and government of God, the character and destiny of man, the ideal of human conduct, and the great motives that are to inspire it—surely that is not relative, changeable, or transitory. Of this not one iota, not one jot or tittle, shall pass away.

2. In view of these statements, you will agree with me when I say that the formative power of the New Testament, and of Christianity as represented in it, was never needed more than now. The amelioration of the condition of society, the elevation of thousands and millions of human minds —is not this the work that is set before us? How immensely selfish and egotistical we are! We seem to think that the world is well enough. So long as we enjoy the blessings of Christian civilization ourselves, it does not occur to us that people outside of our circle, or village, or state, or country, are the victims of ignorance and heathenism. Eight hundred millions of the human race are without a knowledge of the

true God, or of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Down through scores and hundreds of years God has rolled upon men the great question, What will you do with your fellow-men in your day and generation? And if there is to be, not the reconstruction of a few fragments broken off from this invulnerable nation, but the reconstruction of the miserable heathen that populate and desecrate the islands of the sea; of the low, animal, worthless tribes in the interior of Africa; of the effete Oriental nations—if the vast world that lies in darkness is yet to be touched with a sovereign and reviving power, then there must come a spring for sowing the seed of regeneration, and a summer to ripen the harvest thereof. Has philosophy thus far discovered any new principle by which the work can be done without the Gospel? We know that for eighteen hundred years, not philosophy, but the Gospel, has marked out the plan of justice, and set up ideals for men to follow, and raised the scale of social and moral purity in the world. We are advancing to even a greater work. There is as much to be done to-day as there was when the apostles left Jerusalem. The earth is a thousand times more populous now than it was then. Men are intrenched behind stronger prejudices and better organized laws now than they were then. The world has but just commenced its march toward universal emancipation, universal freedom, and universal intelligence.

Just on the eve of battle—is this the time to throw away the shield and spear, and forge some new contrivance with which to wage the conflict? Never was there a time when the Bible was so indispensable. Never was there a time when the knowledge derived from it was so valuable. Never was there a time when its prophecy was so luminous.

3. If there are any that doubt, let it not be the poor. There is no excuse for a poor man's being an infidel; for, if there has been one patron of the poor in all the history of the world, it has been he who was born in poverty; he who, though rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his

poverty might become rich. If Christ is not the poor man's guardian, then there is for him no guardian on earth. The Gospel is the charter of the poor man's liberty. Christ is the hope of his emancipation. Christ is his morning star. Let him follow him. If the poor cast Christ away, they are indeed without God and without hope in the world; for Nature refuses to say one word of hope to the weak against the strong. Nature says, in the conflict of forces, "The weaker force must go down as the stronger comes up; the greater brain must rule the lesser; the more powerful head must circumvent the weaker; the longer arm must take advantage of the shorter; the more cunning finger must weave its own prosperity out of the lack and want of those that are less cunning and powerful." In your need there comes the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ— *Ye are brethren; ye are to bear one another's burden; ye are to die for one another, and so fulfill the law of love.* If there is hope for the poor and struggling, it is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not, then, give up the New Testament, while the weak yet abound, while the strong are arrogant, while wealth is selfish, while prosperity is heartless, while ignorance afflicts the mass of men, and blinds them to their own good and to God's mercy.

4. If these views are correct, there are themes yet for men to preach about besides the theology of nature. It has been said that the pulpit ought not to be turned into a lyceum for the discussion of customs and policies, and such like topics. Any thing that it is right to talk about at all, it is, or it may be right, to talk about in the pulpit. Relatively speaking, I do not know where else you will find such liberty of discussion as there is in the New Testament. Considering the age he lived in, Paul taught on a greater breadth of topics than any man does in this age, or dares to do. And I hold that, in a proper way, there is no theory or philosophy which relates to the welfare of states, or communities, or families, or individuals, or to any part of a man's life, that may not be discussed in the pulpit, and measured by the law of love, and truth, and

justice. But when a man tells me that the power of the pulpit is to be the discussion of social questions, and that that is to be the chief element of the ministry, I look upon him with amazement. Give me the root of the oak, and I will very soon produce the leaves; but if I have only the leaves of the oak, can I with them produce the root? All these various subjects are but outgrowths, the branches, the leaves of the great central spiritual truths that evolve the nature of God and man, and reveal man's destiny.

The power of the pulpit lies partly in its breadth, partly in its versatility and richness, and partly in its faculty for gathering treasure from all nature; but ah! it lies mainly in this, that it is inspired by God—by Christ the Son of God—by Jesus, the atoning Savior. The atoning sacrifice of Christ—this is the central power of the pulpit. Do I speak of taste? The power to speak of it comes from this radiating centre. Do I speak of intellection? The power with which I speak of it is derived from the divine Spirit. Do I speak of philanthropy? It is not from an easy instinct of benevolence, but from the impulse of the natural faculty of benevolence inspired by the Holy Ghost. Do I speak of organization or of society? I gain authority to do it because I stand higher than these things, on the ground of the reconstruction of the universe. It is the wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died once, but who lives now, but as much as ever a sacrifice. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and yet to be a sacrifice to the end of the world—Christ Jesus, everlasting Model, everlasting Master, everlasting God—this, with the power of union with him and love to him, is the secret and centre of the power of the pulpit.

For twenty years I have unfolded the truth among you, and not without results. Those results, in my judgment, have been due, not to a good understanding, not to versatility, not to imagination, not to playing with men's sympathies and tastes, but to the fact that, down deeper than every thing else, I have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. I have not

made that belief ostensible in words, perhaps, as many do, but it is that which has constituted the power of my ministry.

It is my solemn conviction that the power of preaching is not to be found in human elements. It is to range over every topic of human life, but its power is not to be derived from secular and natural influences, but from that divine enthusiasm, that exaltation of every sentiment and faculty which results from an indwelling Savior, and from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Let science still explore. Let study bring forth God's secret thoughts buried in the natural world. Let experiments go on, and civil ameliorations be hastened. There is no antagonism between that old organic revelation of God's architectural thoughts and that newer revelation of God's domestic thoughts. He built the globe as a house for man, and Nature reveals a God in that. He put man into that builded dwelling, and the New Testament reveals the will of God in respect to them. Both revelations are divine. They are coordinate, correlative, complementary. Yet one day they will with intersphering rays shine together; but it will be as the morning star and the rising sun shine, for Nature is the star, and Christ the Sun of Righteousness!

XXI.

The Fatherhood of God.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, December 20th, 1863.

The Fatherhood of God.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father."—Romans, viii., 14, 15.

Luther translates the passage Abba, Father, "*Dear Father.*" In our own language, the expression which perhaps comes nearer to the original than any other is *My Father.* "Abba, Father," means, not Father, Father, as some think, but *My own Father.* "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we"—instinctively and spontaneously—"cry out, My own Father!" "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Suffering, then, is not an evidence that God is averse to us, but one of the evidences, if it be cheerfully borne, of our adoption as his children.

The eighth chapter of Romans, and the preceding one, are the most profound psychological passages in the Bible; and in the higher spiritual elements they are more profound than any thing in literature. The seventh chapter is the problem of conscience. The eighth is the solution of that problem by the formulas of love. In the seventh, a just man, tender of conscience and clear of understanding, with an active ideality, seeks to make a symmetrical life and a perfect character—a thing which is impossible in this world. Under such

circumstances, every mistake rebounds, and every imperfection is caught upon the sensitive conscience, and becomes a source of exquisite suffering and of discouragement; so that, from the necessary conditions of human life, a just man will be made miserable in proportion as he seeks more vehemently to be just.

One way out of this trouble would be to lower the standard of character, and to lower the moral value of conduct. But the ease that comes from lowering our rule of right, and our responsibilities to it, is degrading. Thus to seek ease sends us down toward animals; and that is the true vulgarity. Exquisite as are the pains of a high ideal, and the penalties of violating it, the sorrow, the remorse, and even the despair are more wholesome than the relief which we gain by lowering our conception of law and character. It is better to die in the prison-house of the seventh of Romans, than, missing the eighth, to get relief in any other direction.

The problem of the higher moral life is how to maintain a transcendent ideal of character and conduct above any possible realization by us, and yet have joy and peace, even in the face of sins and imperfections. How to hold up constantly the ideal of what man ought to be, and then every day to measure on that ideal what we are, and yet, seeing how unmatched they are, and how far the real is below the ideal, still to find a peace and a comfort which shall be wholesome to the soul, and not detrimental—that is the problem. And its solution can only be found in one direction—in the direction of divine love. A proper conception of God in the aspect of love, and a habit of bringing the instruments, and customs, and laws of paternal love to the consideration of our personal religious life, will go far to enlighten, stimulate, and comfort us.

There is not a sensitive child that has that most transcendent of all fortunes, the fortune of a noble parentage, who does not know the whole of the eighth of Romans before he is eight years old—practically I mean, although many a child

has read that chapter through without any conception of what it meant. But where an aspiration after virtue and true nobility of character begins early; where this aspiration is checked, and the character is scarred and marked with many shortcomings, and failures, and imperfections; and where, again, the child is brought to rest in the bosom of a mother's forgiving love and a father's benediction; where there is in the child a sense of imperfection and wrong, and, at the same time, a consciousness of being comforted and built up by the love and forgiveness of father and mother—there you have the germ of the eighth of Romans. How to aspire through manifold imperfections toward perfection; how, through daily weakness and want, to look up to the highest ideals of what is right, and to press forward to the realization of those ideals; and how to do it by taking hold of father and mother—that is the very problem of the Gospel. How a man, by clinging to the Lord Jesus Christ, and by maintaining his hold upon the sympathy, and patience, and forgiving love of God, can strive for an ideal Christian manhood, and can do it without lowering his sense of what he ought to be, having all the time a consciousness of sin, and yet not giving way to feelings of remorse and discouragement—that is the lesson which the New Testament is designed to teach.

Consider, then, a little, our text. I have said that the experience of the household, the family experience, was itself the interpretation of this eighth chapter of Romans. Listen to what is said here. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God"—what are they led to?—"they are the sons of God." The direction in which God leads them is toward sonship. And, as if it were not enough to enunciate it, it is said, farther, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear"—that is to say, "You have not received such a view of God as leads you to feel that you have occasion to fear and tremble because you are in such a thrall of sin and transgression;" "but ye have received the Spirit of adop-

tion"—that is, the sign and token that you are Christians. What is the "Spirit of adoption?" It is such a state of heart as makes one feel that he is taken into God's family. It is a child's feeling. And, as if that were not enough, it is explained still farther, "Whereby we cry, Abba, Father—dear Father." It is not dear God; it is not dear King; it is not dear Governor; it is not Majesty or Universality. It is *Father;* and not Father alone, but *my* Father, or, as Luther would put it, my *dear* Father. And you have evidence that you are under God's real teaching when that feeling breaks out in the soul which leads you to say, "Notwithstanding sin, and in spite of wickedness, I am God's child, and he is my Father." That is the token of conversion. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children —the *children*, the CHILDREN—of God." Do not put the emphasis in the wrong place. It is not, "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of *God*." It is this: "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the *children* of our God." It is the sense of being children that is emphatic.

There are a great many ways in which the character of God is necessarily presented to us. He is the Builder of the natural world, and in that aspect he manifests chiefly wisdom and power. He is Lawgiver; he is King; he is Warrior; he is Judge; he is Shepherd; he is Husbandman; he is Householder; he is Father; he is Brother; he is Advocate; and there are many other aspects of the divine nature given in the Word of God. And there is something in each of these aspects which gives us a truer conception of one element of God's character, probably, than can be obtained in any other way. Each one of them interprets something, through our experience, of the unknown and invisible God.

No one epithet can embody all aspects in which God has been presented to us. His titles, therefore, are numerous, and all of them have a designed use. But all are not alike

useful. Those titles which arise from the relation which God sustains to the material world are not so important to us as those arising from his relations to man. The title CREATOR touches admiration. King, Lord of Lords, Ruler—these react closer, and touch more chords. But Savior, Redeemer, Father, bring the divine nature to our hearts in those aspects and relations which move us more deeply than any other.

This is the style and title by which God seems best pleased to be known. It includes in it whatever there is in Lordship, but adds a personality, an element of tenderness familiar to our experience.

In cultivating Christian affections, and especially the sentiment of love to God, it is not a matter of indifference what divine title is commonly used. Some views of God touch fear, some reverence, some admiration, some love and trust. It is these last qualities that we most need to develop. We should keep our God before our minds, not as Lord, Judge, Governor, but as a gracious Father. That word Father includes in it all the elements which we seek to express in the terms Ruler, Judge, King, but invests them with that highest and most characteristically divine element, love—love, too, in action, helping, bearing, educating, suffering for us!

We can not love an abstraction. A governor is an abstraction. It is not the name of a person, but of an executive. It does not express a sympathetic, loving being, but merely a cluster of powers held for the common good by one who uses reason and conscience, but is not at liberty to be biased by favor, by like or dislike. It is not a personality, but an artificial character, a civil creation.

Because we transfer to the divine nature the elements of magistracy, it does not follow that all which belongs properly and necessarily to an earthly magistrate is also found in God. He may rule, and yet by no such devices as human weakness requires of earthly governors. He may and does govern by law; and yet our systems of laws, administered by human hands, are full of weaknesses—necessary, it may

be, but not to be transferred in our thought to God's administration.

Now you may love the *man* who is governor, but no man can love the *governor*. *Governor* is an official title, and not a personal one; and if you train yourself to think of God as an official personage, the soul does not go out after Him. The heart does not twine around abstractions. There are many, therefore, who say, "I desire to love God, and I strive to love him, but I can not." A man can not compel his own love; and if he views God in an aspect that does not inspire his love, he can not love him. You look at God; you believe him to be great, and wise, and good; you fear him and reverence him, but you can not love him, because you are trying to make the soul love that which its very nature renders it impossible for the soul to love—an abstraction—an official character.

This way of looking at God also presents to you a being acting, not from personal sympathy with you, but from considerations of universal law and government, or, as it is said, on the principle of seeking the greatest good of the greatest number. Our conception of a governor is that he is a ruler, who, being restricted by laws which are designed to secure the highest benefit to the whole, is not at liberty to follow his own personal feelings. And with this conception persons go to God in prayer, and say, "Lord, have mercy on me, provided thou canst do it consistently with the greatest good of all thy subjects." What is a prayer good for that is circumscribed by an abstract consideration of law? What chance is there for heart-clasping where there is no freedom for the manifestation of spontaneous emotions? Who would make love to a fellow-being by propounding an abstract theory of mental philosophy as the basis of it? And how many persons' prayers are made to be abstractions, founded on abstract notions of a government administered by an abstract governor! It is not to be wondered at that such persons come back from their devotions and say, "I can not love." It

would be a miracle if they could, under such circumstances. It is this that the Word of God declaims against and rebounds at, where God is represented as saying, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." It is as if an objector had said, "God is the God of the Jews, and he can have mercy on the Jews because it is according to law," God resents the imputation, and says, "Am I to be restrained by this or any other imaginary law or necessity? My nature is such that wherever I choose to have mercy I can do it, and can do it consistently with the greatest good of all; and wherever I do not choose to have mercy I can forbear. Whom I will, I will harden, even if he is a Jew, and it will be just and right; and whom I will, I will save, no matter if he be a Gentile, and it will be just and right. I am of a sound conscience, and it is just and right for me, as God, to act according to my own feelings and judgment. For I am not such a God as you imagine—an abstraction, administering a machinery of laws outside of myself. My thoughts are pure, my law is true, my sympathies all carry rectitude and health; and wherever I choose to pour out my feeling, it is safe to do it. I assert my liberty to love where I will love, and to bless where I will bless."

We need to have that echoed again in our hearing often and often, for it brings back our lost God, and clothes the abstraction with sympathies, and volitions, and loves, and personalities which make it possible for us to find our way to Him.

You can not bring yourself into the posture and the feelings of a child, as you are commanded to do, if you are all the time praying to a governor, to a lawgiver, or to a judge. If you go before a judge, you go before him in some relation of law; if you go before a lawgiver, you go before him as a subject; if you go before a governor or ruler, you go in your citizen's character, and in a civil relation. If you are going to God as a child, you must find a God that shall answer to a father. There must be that which shall draw the child;

and hence Christians should accustom themselves to think of God as paternal, and not as governmental. It makes a great deal of difference whether you draw your rules for measuring sin, and the desert of sin, from a government administered over a state, or from a government administered over a household—from a government administered by a father, or from a government administered by a ruler.

The family, then, and not the state, is the fittest model for contemplation. The father, and not the governor, is the true ideal of the Christian's God. All the justice which is needed in the state exists just as really in a government which is characterized by fatherhood as in a magisterial government. The person who administers over a state can not yield to the influence of sympathy and love, and can only execute justice; while in the family, though justice is no less secured, it is carried out under the influence of love and sympathy. In so small a circle as the family you can make justice the servant of love, and make love the true power of administration; but if you augment that circle, and take in hundreds, and thousands, and millions, no *man* can administer on the same principle. No man is built large enough to administer over a million by the same process that he would over five, or ten, or fifteen.

The fact to be kept in view is, that God is able to do toward the race what the father in the family is able to do toward a few persons. God is able to carry his mind so that love shall be predominant, and justice shall be but a modification of love toward all mankind, as easily as father or mother is able to do it toward four or five little children. The family government, with all its imperfection, is the ideal of government in this world; and the mode in which father and mother bring their children up through the spirit of love, not voiding or setting aside justice, presents the clearest conception of the way in which God governs the whole realm of any that ever was presented; so that, when you measure God by the conceptions which you form outside

of the family, you measure him by a false standard. You take that which springs from human weakness and impose it upon the divine mind, instead of taking that model which is afforded in the divine character and the divine government.

Let us, then, look at some of the results that may be expected to flow from the contemplation of God as a parent, in distinction from God contemplated as the governor of a state, or empire, or realm.

And, first, Christians will be set free from that endless list of what may be called questions of spiritual statesmanship. I will take the most familiar instance, namely, the ground and reason of our acceptance with the Lord Jesus Christ. While there is a great truth of atonement and of its preparation, constituting the means or plan of salvation, and while, in the process of religious education, the profound questions at the root of these truths should be studied, yet, when one is seeking the Savior, it is unwise to withdraw his mind from the concrete person and fix it upon the modes by which such personage was prepared to love and forgive the repentant. There stands the undimmed and undying picture of our Lord Jesus Christ, pure, lovely, winning, living for others, and, for the love he bears, dying for them. He was made a sacrifice for sin. The atoning work is complete, and forgiveness and divine friendship are proffered to all who repent and come to him. The act of faith in Christ, an implicit trust springing from love, is one of the simplest actions possible to the soul. But the theory of moral government, the nature of Christ's atoning work, and the ground and reason of it, demand for their acceptance no inconsiderable power of analysis and of reasoning. Faith in one's father is the shadow of that grander faith in God. To make the faith in Christ wait until men understand the theory of atonement, is not to help, but to hinder the soul. It is true that men sin against law, but it is equally true, and far more effective, to teach them that they sin against God. Very different will be the sorrow for grieving a *person* from that of breaking a *law*.

Shall one be obliged to wait before believing till he knows *how* an atonement was made? in what it consists? what is its relation to God's nature, to moral government, and to each individual under that government? The question is not whether such philosophic views may not be fairly deduced from Scripture facts, but whether Christ is presented to our minds through such abstractions as a *living* Savior, as he was to those to whom the apostles preached? Is it necessary to bring down the abstract view of God as a governor, as a medium through which to exercise toward him feelings which a child exercises toward a parent? The simple conduct of a child toward its parent when it has done wrong, and when it is sorry for the wrong, and grieves over it, and throws itself into its mother's bosom—this better epitomizes the coming back to the God of sinners than any possible explanation derived from governmental policy. And why should you take the familiar experience that belongs to the family, cloud and darken it by bringing in a conception of God as a governor, with a whole train of doctrinal issues? I hold that you are, by representing God as a governor instead of a father, embarrassing and not helping men in their endeavors to become Christians. It is said that these views make stronger Christians. Yes, very much as among Indians children are made strong by killing the weak ones, and leaving only those that are so tough that nothing can kill them! If it is right to destroy twenty men to get one strong Christian, then these methods are right; but if I understand the spirit of the Gospel, it was sent to the weak. "Him that is weak in the faith," the apostle says, "receive ye; but not to doubtful disputations." And any view that destroys twenty, even if it does make the twenty-first a stronger man, is not the Gospel view.

Now let no man say that I am preaching against high doctrines. I am not doing that at all. But, on the other hand, I assert my liberty. I recognize the liberty of any body who is called and moved to enter into such generalizations as

these; but when a pastor is appointed to bring up a congregation, he has no right to dwell upon abstract and philosophic views to the exclusion of views that develop the fatherhood of God, and represent Christians as children in the household of faith. Such views are best calculated to meet the average want of men. It is your liberty to take those other views; but they are not the common food of the Christian Church, and they ought not to be made the common food of the Christian Church. And yet high doctrines have been made so indispensable that, if a man did not preach them, his orthodoxy was suspected, and he was denounced as a heretic. A man, though he preached the sinfulness of the human heart, though he preached Christ as the Savior of mankind, though he declared that faith in Christ was essential to the salvation of the soul, though the whole burden of his preaching was to develop the highest and sweetest moral elements, if he did not preach that frame-work of doctrine from which it is claimed that Christianity derived its validity, was thought to be unsound. There is an idolatry of spiritual mechanism. Philosophy stands in the place of a living person! We are called to grieve for an abstraction, to yearn for generic ideas, to love and praise a system! There is an abstract piety that is made despotic over the simpler elements of God in Christ, and these operate to shut out that view of God which makes him the father of those who put their trust in him.

What is needed, then, is that men should be set free. They are in a bondage like that spoken of in the Bible. There are some who are all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death. Many great natures have I seen that all their lifetime have striven, and prayed, and sought justice and truth, and effulged on every side the sweetest affections, who, if they had been in their own conscience at liberty to throw their arms about God, and said, "Thou art my father, and I am thy child," would have been happier and more cheerful Christians. But they were reared to feel that there

was a way appointed, not by which they could go to God as a father because they were children, but a governmental way by which they must approach him as a governor. And so they led a life of unsatisfied longing and yearning—a life of bondage.

Oh, sweet-faced death! that comes with a mask of iron, and seizes many and many a trembling captive, and drags him to execution, and that, while he waits for the terrific stroke, behold it is an angel of deliverance that discloses the glory of God to him, and brings him at last to see his Creator as he is—not a governor, but a father—thus furnishing him an object for that struggling affection which should have gone out earlier, and which did go out earlier, but which did not know its own rights and liberties! There is many and many a man that has gone dropping tears of sadness to the grave, and emerged bearing the beginnings of that choral song which shall roll forever in the presence of God!

I remark, next, that the use of this view of God as father instead of governor will make our daily life an interpreter of God's providence, and will bring all our ethical and casuistical questions to a rule most familiarly understood and most easily applied.

Not every thing that a father would do must be supposed to be a part of God's government. We all discriminate, naturally, between things that are weaknesses in a parent and things that are right; and in judging of the divine administration by that of the family, we are in danger of attributing to the fatherhood of God elements which are found in human parents, but only because they are imperfect and sinful. But the danger is not peculiar to this source of our knowledge of God. It is as great, and even greater, in the case of those whose conceptions are modeled upon the administration of the magistrate or governor. In forming a judgment of the feelings of God toward men, and of their relations to him, a man of an instructed conscience and understanding will

come much nearer to a right judgment if he takes his measure of interpretation from the actual experiences of the family than if he takes it from the experiences of the civil state.

Do you suppose that it was an accident that led God to assume the name of Father, and to give to the Church the name of that institution into which all mankind are born, through which they pass, and which colors every thought and feeling, and gives shape to the whole of human life? It is declared, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." And where we are called sons; where the Church is called a household; where the form of address is "Our Father;" where we are spoken of as heirs and joint-heirs; where every allusion to God represents him as a father, and every allusion to the Church represents it as a family, is there no meaning in it?

There are many aspects of Christian experience that are very difficult upon which this view throws light. For instance, it is very difficult to understand how, when we have done wrong, and are overwhelmed with contrition, God, who is holy, and just, and true, can look upon us with emotions of sympathy or affection. We think of some worthy judge, of some worthy magistrate like Washington; we turn ourselves every whither, and all the models within the range of our comprehension are able to give us only imperfect light and satisfaction.

A man is asked, "Are you a father?" "Yes," he replies. "Have you a son?" "Yes." "Do you love him?" "Better than my own life." "Does he ever do wrong?" "Yes." "When he does wrong, how do you feel?" "I feel indignant, because I love him so; for wrong on one that I love is like a sore in my heart." Now, from such an experience as this, do you not begin to have an interpretation of what God's feeling is toward sin? Do you not have it in your own experience? Can you not understand how God hates, not the sinner, but the sin that is a spot upon his be-

loved child, from the hatred that you feel toward the vices and wickedness that disfigure your child, because you so love that child?

"Well," you say, "if God is so holy, and just, and true, does he not destroy sinners?" When your child has been gambling, and you first find it out, do you draw a line, and say to him, "If you ever transcend that line again, I will exclude you from my house?" Some persons take this course, and every one blames them. They are not true parents. The fatherhood and motherhood is not deep in such hearts as theirs. What does a parent do for a child that goes wrong? Is there any thing that you have in your house that you would not give to redeem a wandering son? Is there any property that you would not willingly part with to get him out of trouble, and to hide his disgrace? If to live on a crust, if to drink only water from the spring, and eat only roots from the ground, would reform the child of your heart, would you not give all your means, and think that you had bought him back cheaply? Nay, more than that, if for his sake it was necessary that you should bear with him; that you should lie awake nights till your whole heart was like a furnace of fire; that you should be mortified in your pride, disappointed in your expectation, or wounded in your affections, would you not willingly submit to the necessity? If, in carrying his burden, or bearing his sorrow, there was a glimmer of hope that in ten or fifteen years you could save your child, would you not cheerfully suffer on in his behalf?

Now, when it is said that God carries our sorrows, and bears our sins, is there no light thrown upon the statement by the experience of the parent in bringing up his child? And when it is said that God hates sin, is there no light thrown upon the statement by the feelings of the parent toward the sin in the child? And is it because the parent does not care for the sin that he bears with it? Is there any one that realizes how hateful sin is so much as the parent who is bearing it for the sake of the child?

And when your child comes back to you, and says, "Father, I am reformed, but I may not be able to walk entirely right; I understand what you have done for me; I feel it, and I am taking another course of life, but I may stumble in the way;" oh, with what inexpressible tenderness do you receive him! Why, the child does not know how to be glad. It takes a father or a mother to be glad!

When I stood in Antwerp, and heard the chime of some fifty or sixty bells, I could not bear to go any whither, lest I should get out of the sound of those exquisite peals that rolled every hour, and half hour, and quarter hour, filling the air with a weird and yet wonderful sweetness; and I thought to myself, "There, just such are all the feelings of a father's heart when it is lifted up with hope, and all things ring, at every hour, and half hour, and quarter hour, and minute, of the return of some wandering child." And does the experience of that father whose child has begun to come back from a career of wrong-doing give you no conception of God's feelings when the sinner begins to return to a life of virtue? How sweet it is! how deep it is! how real it is! Do not stop at any legal question. Do not wait till you can reconcile law and grace. Take the idea of your earthly father and apply that to God, and it will give you the best view of the gladness of God at the sinner's reformation which it is possible for the human mind to conceive of.

And when the child who has wandered from the true path returns, and though he strives earnestly to live aright, after the first or second day falters, so that the father sees that there is a relapse, or falls, so that he bears the marks of condemnation, does the father say, "If that is your reformation, I am weary of you; you made me many fair promises, but you have broken them, and I will have nothing more to do with you?" On the contrary, he says, "My son, I feared that if you mingled with your old associates you would fall. Now help yourself by me. I will go with you, and sustain you. I will forget this fall. It came near taking away all

that you had gained; but do not be discouraged. You must lean more on me. You must not trust yourself till you are strong enough to stand alone." The father thinks almost more of the child than the child does of himself. From this familiar experience of parental life do you not get a conception of the divine patience with men in their helplessness, and of the training and educating force of the love of God in Christ Jesus?

And so of every other one of the strains of Christian experience. I hold that, in the case of those things which are peculiarly Christian, and that are elements of personal experience, you can scarcely measure them by the conception of God as a governor without darkening counsel. But, on the other hand, if you measure them by the conception of God as a loving father, you will get light and consolation.

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God"—that is, as many as are being truly led, as many as are being led by right things in the right way—"they are the sons of God."

Then God is father, and all the relations between Him and them must be judged by the relations which a parent bears to a child.

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear."

Reference is made to the moral principle enunciated in Galatians, where it is said, "Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman." The posterity of the bond-woman were held to fear, but the posterity of the free-woman were inheritors of liberty. And the apostle says, "We are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free;" that is, "You are held to God, not as a governor, but as a father; and you are not servants under a governor, but you are children of a father."

"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, My dear Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our

spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

If you think that the afflictions which you suffer show that you are not such favored ones, he nips your doubts and skepticisms in the very bud, and says, "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." As he worked out consolation, and became perfect through suffering, so we must all have our share of that cross which he bore.

My dear Christian brethren, I can not follow out this subject into all the details that I meant to. You have your children to educate, and you have in your feeling toward them an interpretation of the feeling of God toward you. You have your children to teach, that they, in their turn, may by-and-by become educators. See to it that you do not found their character upon abstract speculative notions and doctrines. Present to them that which they can comprehend —the fatherhood of God, and the love that is every day translated and interpreted to them by your love. And let your dealings with your child furnish an idea of God's dealing with His children; for the notion of fatherhood which the child gets from you is that by which he is to interpret his God, and to form his Christian character. You are the child's Bible. God made it to be so. In the earlier years of their life you stand in the place of God to your children; and what you are for justice, and truth, and simplicity, and love, that God will be to their thought. And if you are narrow, and mean, and hard, and cold, and ungenerous, you have torn the leaf out of their Bible by which they should know the highest attributes of the divine mind.

God grant that you may be able so to live that your children, through you, may see God, and inherit life eternal.

XXII.

The Sympathy of Christ.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, May 1st, 1859.

The Sympathy of Christ.

"Seeing, then, that we have a great high-priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession; for we have not a high-priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Hebrews, iv, 14–16.

When it is said that Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, we are not to understand that he stood in every relation in which we stand. He sat on no throne. Neither did he, as some have done, linger from year to year in dungeons. He was not a husband or a father. He did not trade or traffic. So that there are special varieties of external history which befall men that did not come to Christ. It is not therefore true that he experienced each particular fret, nor each particular form of external trouble, which comes upon us. But these external things are only so many occasions and avenues of internal disturbance. The experiences which men have through these reach back upon certain sensitive faculties; they become soul experiences. It is in this inward respect that Christ was tried as we are. There is no part of our being, there is no faculty in our nature, which is ever tried, that was not tried in Christ; and though he was not tried in the same way in which we are, though he was not tried by the same events in his external history by which we are pressed in our external history, yet the trials which he endured were, in respect to intensity, greater than they ever could be in us; and there is no part of a man's nature which any combination of circumstances

or conditions, either in the religious, the social, or the civil departments of life, can meet and disturb, which had not a corresponding element in the Lord Jesus Christ. There was not an experience of this inward sort with which he was not perfectly familiar.

It is not important, therefore, to show the identity of external experience. What we wish, according to the spirit of this passage, is to be sure that we have a Savior who is in intimate relations with us, and who is tenderly alive to every stage of our growth, so that we may freely, unhesitatingly, and in all things trust him; that we have a Savior who has been, by his personal experience, so conversant with our suffering and want, that he understands us by understanding himself.

The second thing to be explained in this passage is the idea of divine sympathy as arising from the training which is said elsewhere to be necessary to make Christ the leader of his brethren; as in the second chapter of this epistle, at the tenth verse, where we read, "It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings; for both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Out of this training, this schooling, this experience of suffering on earth there has been developed a sympathy of Christ with us. In us, so far as our knowledge extends, sympathy is the most exquisite and perfect expression of love. It signifies such an interest, such a peculiar affection, that the person sympathizing receives another's experience as a part of his own; whether it be joy or sorrow, he is so intimately united to another that he feels with him; that whatever feeling, pleasant or painful, trembles on another's heart, trembles upon his.

We can imagine a being to be helpful in various degrees without being sympathetic; as when a man, acting from a cold sense of duty, helps another with a sort of police help-

fulness, or from considerations of general benevolence, without being greatly moved himself. It is possible for a truly benevolent man to be entirely serene (as a physician, who bends over a patient to whom he is giving great pain, may be kind and gentle), and yet not experience in himself any correspondence of feeling, and not be, to any considerable degree, in sympathy with that patient.

But there are relationships in which men are affected by another's experience, when they come nearer than mere duty or ordinary benevolence would draw them, as when persons are connected together by bonds of personal affection. When a child falls, it hurts the mother a great deal more than it hurts the child, though nothing touches her except the sound of its fall. We often suffer more on account of others' troubles than they themselves do in those troubles, for both love and sorrow take their measure as much from the capacity of the nature that experiences them as from the power of the externally exciting cause. How much a great nature loves does not depend wholly upon how much there is to love, but upon how much there is to love with. In like manner, how much one suffers with or for another does not depend altogether upon how much that other is suffering, but upon how much that nature which sympathizes has with which to suffer.

Now the teaching here—and it only corroborates what is abundantly taught elsewhere in the New Testament—the teaching here, in respect to our Savior, is, that he sympathizes with us as his children. He feels with us, so that our experiences throw their waves upon the shore of his soul. He carries us so near to his heart that all our feelings, which are of any moment, reproduce their effects, in some degree, in his bosom.

It seems very strange that the Maker of all the earth should permit himself to be a participant in all the ten thousand petty experiences that belong to any human life. No man would have dared to conceive such an idea of God, and

to have believed any such thing as that, if it had not been revealed in unequivocal terms; for men would have said, "It is beneath any true idea of the majesty of God to suppose that he bends his bosom to all the rippling waves of human hearts, and feels again what they are feeling in their lower courses."

A great mountain lifts itself up, with perpendicular face, over against some quiet valley; and when summer thunders with great storms, the cliff echoes the thunder, and rolls it forth a second time, with majesty increased; and we think that, to be sublime, storms should awaken mountain echoes, and that then cause and effect are worthy of each other. But so, too, an oriole, or a song-sparrow, singing before it, hears its own little song sung back again. A little child, lost, and crying, in the valley, hears the great cliff weeping just as it weeps; and, in sooth, the mountain repeats whatever is sounded, from the sublimest notes of the tempest to the sweetest bird-whisper or child-weeping; and it is just as easy to do the little as the great, and more beautiful. Now God is our rock, and from his heart is inflected every experience, every feeling of joy or grief, that any human soul utters or knows.

Consider the nature of the Divine Being, and the condition of those into whose life he enters by sympathy. Christ, as God, is possessed of all possible excellence. He is Head over all. Nothing is so impossible as to conceive the perfections of God—the symmetry and the beauty of the divine nature. It is not merely impossible to understand, with any degree of perfectness, the kind and quality of the divine excellence; but when we attempt to put one trait with another, and see how one balances another, and goes to make up the perfect ideal of character, we are too small and too sinful to reproduce in our experience a conception of God that answers to the glory and the fullness of the reality.

Gold is gold every where, and yet imagine a piece of undug ore in California, under the rocks and dirt, attempting

to conceive of the exquisite forms which art has placed upon gold elsewhere — in crowns, embroideries, paintings, gildings, carvings, and what not, the world around. It is not enough that gold lying in the ore should say, "All gold is like me." It may be in quality; but when it shall know what art has done with other gold—that it has dug it out, and smelted it, and wrought it into beautiful forms—it very soon sees that mere ore has in itself no test or measure of the gold that has been dug, and purified, and wrought. So by our love we understand something of the quality of the love which God feels, our benevolence interprets something of his benevolence, and our justice discovers to us something of his justice. But oh! how little do we conceive of what is the overflowing abundance, the majesty, the measure, the applications, the combinations of the life-history of One dwelling in eternity from eternity, and bearing, with infinite majesty, all the combined strains of these many-tempered feelings! How little is there in our time, how little has there been in any age, by which men could take any adequate thought of God! It is impossible, by searching, to find him out.

Consider, too, that universal government is on the shoulders of this Being, who is so great in all excellence that he transcends our highest conceptions. The heavens, the earth, the created universe, are all in his care. And this government of God includes time—the past and the future; and includes an inconceivable number of separate creatures.

We gain some sort of an idea when we say INFINITE in relation to physical things, but in respect to God infinity relates to feeling. Although there is an infiniteness in the nature of his natural attributes, yet it is the administration of his heart that makes him God.

Now the teaching of the New Testament is, that this princely and divine Being, who is lifted up to an inconceivable height of excellence, from whom all things that are good or noble did proceed, epitomizes in himself all these qualities which, in fragmentary and scattered states among rare and

great souls on earth, excite our most enthusiastic admiration. He who unites in himself all these is One that, of his own nature and choice, is perpetually bearing us with such intimate tenderness and emotion, that our own life is, as it were, re-written, re-registered in his sympathetic feeling.

When the French government took steps to adorn the Academy of Design in Paris, they gave to Delaroche the painting of that picture which has now become world-renowned, called "The Hemicycle," in which, in some seventy or eighty figures, he grouped around an imaginary art-tribunal all the great architects, sculptors, engravers, and painters both of the ancient and modern world. Now imagine a larger court than this, and that in some vast area you had gathered together all the great souls that have adorned human life, and made the world rich, from the beginning; all great thinkers; all great legislators, commencing with the greatest—Moses; all great poets, who stand next to legislators as ordainers of the people's life; all great diplomatists; all great philosophers; all men who have had a deep insight into nature; all men of great bounty, and benevolence, and liberality; all men of princely wealth; all men eminent as artists; all noted scholars; all men of every age and class who have risen so high that their names have come down to us in history—imagine that you had gathered together such an assembly of men, and that each one was full of exquisite consciousness and susceptibility as regards the specialty in which he excelled, so that Michael Angelo had a full consciousness of all those wonderful combinations which populated his mind; so that Raphael had a full consciousness of all those sweet and exquisite conceptions which presented themselves to his interior vision; so that all that Murillo saw, and all that Claude fancied, and all that every other artist who had become eminent had ever conceived, should stand forth in them with exquisite, living sensibility, and then bring down from the highest point of heaven this Christ, and let him stand in their midst, and let one after another speak to him,

each of the thing which is most to him; and, one by one, as they speak to him, let them find that all of thought which they possess is his thought, that all of conception which they have is his conception, that all of sensibility and taste which they are conscious belong to their being are his sensibility and taste; let them find that he is familiar with every thing in which they have stood pre-eminent; let the poet find that, as compared with Christ, he is but a prattling child; let the sculptor find that, as compared with Christ, he is but an unbegun artist; let the orator find that his words, in comparison with those of Christ, fall paralyzed upon his lips, and they would, every one of them, bow before him, and say, "Never man spake like this man." The architect, the sculptor, the painter, the poet, the orator, the philosopher, the scientist—every man in his own specialty; he that has ransacked the world in the line of beauty; he that has explored nature in the range of colors; they who have produced works of art that have challenged the admiration of the world; they who have moved masses with their eloquence; they who have soared any whither in the fields of knowledge, or science, or art—these would each say, instantly, "I am but a spark, and here is the great and glowing soul out of which I flew as a mere spark." They would cry, "Were all of us gathered and tempered into one great nature, melted into one living being, we should still be less than nothing in the presence of this majesty of excellence, that includes every thing in heaven, and all that can be on earth, and out of whom sprang every thing that is, and every thing that has been." The universal acknowledgment to him would be, "In thee we live, and move, and have our being."

Now that such a being should, by reason of his nature, stoop, with all these endless excellences, with this weight of glory upon him, to bestow his care upon us; that, having surrounded himself with whatever things we might suppose a godlike mind would want, he should still, on the throne, and amid the crowns and praises of heaven, never think of

luxury, or leisure, or retirement, or seclusion; that, fresh as on the morning of primal creation, he should still make conditions which require that the hand which struck man into being should be interposed to nurse, and watch, and care for him; that he should carry in his own almighty but infinitely sensitive heart his own creatures forever, so that all the pulsations of their endless being should be echoed and reproduced in him; that, from his very nature, he should be a sympathizing God, so that it may be said literally that he feels what you feel, sorrows with your sorrow, and joys with your joy—that God should be such a Being, and do these things, is calculated to fill the imagination with astonishment and the heart with joy.

What is his language to us? Cast all your care on me; come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; take no thought even for food or raiment; your Father knoweth what things ye have need of; the very hairs of your head are all numbered; not a sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father's notice, and ye are better than many sparrows; I am touched with a feeling of your infirmities. These are expressions indicative of the real nature of God. In his height of infinite excellence he still addresses himself to his creatures in such language as this.

Let us now bring home this thought of God in his greatness and majesty, and yet in his tender sympathy, by detailing some of the elements in us which are included in this sympathy.

First, Christ's sympathy for us includes our whole state as physical beings in a material world, and all that belongs to us in our social and physical relations, and all that befalls us on that account. I think that God loves the material world just because it carries us. I think that he administers it just because he loves us.

I see a mother that, as the twilight falls, and the baby sleeps, and because it sleeps out of her arms, goes about

gathering from the floor its playthings, and carries them to the closet, and carries away the vestments that have been cast down, and stirring the fire, sweeping up the hearth, winding the clock, and gathering up dispersed books, she hums to herself low melodies as she moves about the room, until the whole place is once again neat, and clean, and in order. Why is it that the room is so precious to her? Is it because there is such beautiful paper on the walls? because there is so goodly a carpet on the floor? because the furniture in the room is so pleasing to the eye? All these are nothing in her estimation except as servants of that little creature of hers—the baby in the cradle. She says, "All these things serve my heart while I rock my child." The whole round globe is but a cradle, and our God rocks it, and regards all things, even the world itself, as so many instruments for the promotion of our welfare. When he makes the tempest, the pestilence, or the storm, when he causes ages in their revolutions to change the world, it is all to serve his own heart through his children—men. When we are walking through this world, we are not walking through long files of laws that have no design; we are walking through a world that has natural laws, which we must both know and observe; yet these must have their master, and Christ is he. And all of these are made to be our servants because we are God's children.

I went back last summer to the place where I was born. I would not go into the house where my mother died—there is a school kept there now—but I walked around the ground, and I do not think it required any special poetical imagination to feel that I was at my father's old homestead. Here was I born, and earliest knew what FATHER and MOTHER meant. Although the whole village was beautiful, there was to me no such spot of ground there as that little yard where I first learned life, just because it was my father's. There is something in home, in the homestead, in paternal acres, that gives a feeling of ownership.

Thus I feel in walking about the world. I have never seen a lease or a deed that could wipe out God's ownership in the things he has created. When I see a rich man's garden, I say, "You are only a tenant here; my Father owns it." When I walk through the fields, I say to myself, "These are God's." When I move through forests, or climb over mountains, or pass along streams that are forever singing, singing freely, unpaid, and for the mere joy of singing, I say to myself, "They are my God's. He is in the world, and the world was made by him. Jesus, my Savior, who made the world, made them." And I look upon the world more fondly on this account. I say of the world, "It is God, my Father, who made it, and shall I not be safe in my own Father's house, and on my own Father's homestead?"

In all the various vicissitudes of this life, amid all the trials to which you are exposed, you are never in danger of getting beyond your Father's domain. In Asia, in Africa, in South America, in North America, on the sea and on the land, wherever you are, whatever is about you, you are always at home, if you will only think so.

But, *secondly*, all that befalls us on account of our relative weakness, our ignorance, and our troubles, are within the sympathy of God. There are ten thousand troubles which come upon us because we do not know how to avoid them. It is great consolation which men give us when they say, "All sin is disobedience to natural laws, and if men would only observe natural laws, there would never be any more suffering or any more sin." Well, possibly there would not, but I perceive no relief in the thought. In the first place, you do not know half of these laws; and, in the second place, you do not know how to fulfill those which are discovered. I think there is nothing in this world, with all its oscillating tendencies, more dreary than for a man to attempt to carry all his feelings in obedience to natural laws.

Here is a man with a great head, a vast volume of sensitive brain, and a slender body. He had no part in making

himself. He awoke to consciousness in a body prefigured. The scheme of material laws is relative to each man. His temperament and organization determines what is obedience or disobedience to natural law. Now suppose you were to shove that man, organized as he is, out into life, where he is in the midst of men who are constantly pouring excitement in upon him from every direction—where influences that come down upon him are like streams of living fire—and you were to say to him, "You must not use up your susceptibility, for if you do, you will violate natural laws." You might as well say to Niagara, "Do not tumble down so fast," when the whole weight of the mighty lake is continually forcing it forward. To tell a man, who has a nature which he can not control, to bear himself in obedience to natural laws, would be like saying to a child, "Keep your feet," when it was being rolled and whirled about by a fierce tornado.

The fact is, natural laws are almost as much above our reach as God himself is, and they are cold, and stern, and relentless, and unforgiving. It is exceeding consolation to me to know, after having violated a natural law, that if I had avoided its violation, I might have escaped the consequences! It is a great comfort to me to be told, "You would not have had this headache to-day if you had not taken that indigestible dinner yesterday!" It is too late to tell me of it now, after the dinner is taken. There is no such thing as observing natural laws when to-day is but the prophet of yesterday. And when I do not know the nature of things—when there are so many natural laws that I can not know them all—when I am making every effort, amid all kinds of discouragements, to carry thirty or forty feelings so as to be in harmony with natural laws, and through ignorance which I can not help I fail to accomplish all I could wish, then to tell me, "Nobody cares for you, nobody pities you; you have violated natural laws, and you are receiving the just penalty of such violation," is heartless—is unfeeling.

Now God says, "I am in this respect just as you are to

your own child that is attempting to walk, but does not know how; that does not know the nature of food; that has no knowledge of what is good for it and what is not, and whose experience you are endeavoring to supply by your own experience, teaching it to help and protect itself as fast as the development of its faculties will allow." He is a being of compassion toward his creatures in respect to those troubles which arise on account of their ignorance of natural laws.

Thirdly, this sympathy of God is a sympathy which takes in all our aspirations, all our yearnings, all our unanswered affections. For example, a poor man would be rich, and for the noblest reasons. I see men who mean to be rich, not because they want pelf, but because they have a strong desire to make those who are dependent on them comfortable and happy. The poor man would place his wife in easier circumstances. It is love which inspires toil. If avarice speeds some, the affections awaken more to industry, frugality, and prudence. He looks upon his sons or daughters, and says, "It is but little to me that they are of humble birth, and that they have to eat coarse bread; but oh! that I could give them the advantages of learning; oh! that I could afford them the opportunity of traveling and of seeing what other people's children see, and of becoming refined in their tastes and manners. For the sake of my household I am willing to be a drudge all my life." I have seen men, the burden of whose life was to give their children the advantages of education, and who have devoted thirty or forty of the best years of their life to this laudable object, and who were yet unable to do for their children all they wished.

Now do you suppose that when such aspirations are locked up in a man's bosom, God does not know it? Do you suppose there is one such aspiration that he does not sympathize with? Do you suppose there is one worthy desire which God does not notice, and which, if disappointed, will not come into the final account? Here are hearts made wondrously to love, and by some strange conjunction of circum-

stances, which we are not prepared to understand, they have never had any where that they could bestow their treasures. There are natures that go palpitating to the end of their earthly existence, who, in the allotments of a mysterious providence, seem to have no standing-place or foundation in life. And do you suppose that when a heart turns back forever from aspirations unsatisfied, pained, and yet not impatient, God does not understand all the feelings which it experiences, and sympathize with them?

There are persons to whom God has given sensitive, poetic natures — silent poets, with hearts overflowing with elevated thoughts and lofty aspirations, but denied opportunity. They toil in menial stations. They wear out in uncongenial labors. Golden thoughts rise like vapors over secluded lakes, and, like them, condense and fall back unnoticed. Do you suppose that such great souls are marching in their obscurity unseen of God, and unthought of and uncared for by him? Do you not frequently see persons who seem to be possessed of superior powers, and to be capable of accomplishing wonderful achievements in the world, yet who were so beset with difficulties that it was impossible for them to render their powers available as they could wish? I have seen men who, having made one mistake in life, have toiled thirty years to extricate themselves from the thraldom into which that mistake had thrust them. I have seen men who started on the threshold of life with every prospect of a useful and honorable career, but whose light had gone down before they touched the age of twenty years, when they said, "Now I must navigate the ocean without star or compass. I have no one to go before me in this troublous way. I am manacled, I am handcuffed, I am kept down by this accident, or this allotment of providence. I have no longer any power or any place in the world." Do you suppose that men standing in the midst of such circumstances—and there are thousands who do; there are many before me who do—do you suppose, I say, that men standing in the midst of such circumstances

as I have described are without the notice and the sympathy of God?

It is an unspeakable pleasure to know that there is a being who has a heart of exquisite susceptibility, and that he knows you intimately, and what your troubles are, and says, "I sympathize with you; I am touched with the feeling of your infirmities." "Ah! but," you say, "I could get along with the infelicities of life if it were not for this consciousness of wickedness—if it were not for these throes of ignominious guilt. If I was worthy of God, I could bear any thing." When we have the greatest sense of our unworthiness and of our sin, it is the hardest thing in this world to strive toward God. And yet the sympathy of Christ includes our sin. He is sorry for us, and sympathizes with us on account of our sin. Calvary, mountain of blessings, is testimony that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. No trumpet will ever speak as the death of Christ speaks in evidence that our woes and sorrows affect the sympathetic heart of God, and make him sorrow for us. Living, he gave himself for us; dying, he gave himself for us; living again, he lives to intercede for us; and the farther we can remove this idea from all our hearts, and the nearer we can bring it home to our consciousness of guilt, the more nearly shall we come to the feelings of Christ toward those who are sinful. Let me, in this connection, read a verse or two preceding our text:

"The word of God"—that is, God's mind—"is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

What a tremendous expression of God's insight into, his familiarity with, and the universality of his knowledge of,

every throb and fluctuation of the wickedness of the human soul! It is anatomized, dissected, laid open, and God looks upon it, and he sees the whole of it perfectly. And it is in view of this knowledge of God of the intensity and the interiorness of our moral unworth and sinfulness that we have this exhortation: "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need."

A man goes to his physician, and says to him, "I have, sir, very great suffering; I have very sharp pains that shoot through my breast; I have very acute pains in my spine; and my head seems to have abandoned all its uses." The physician interrogates him, and says to him, "What has been the course of your life?" The man is ashamed to tell; he says, "Well, sir, I have been exposed to dampness in various ways, and my impression is that I am troubled with neuralgia." The physician proceeds to prescribe for him on the supposition that his difficulty is neuralgia; but as he gets no better, but a good deal worse, he says to himself, "I do not believe my physician understands my case. I do not believe the medicine he is giving me is doing me any good." But he has withheld the truth from his physician. He has not let him into the secret of his trouble. At length he goes to another physician, and says, "Can you do me any good?" This physician knows so much that he don't know any thing; and after putting a few pompous questions to the man concerning his case, he says, "Yes, I can cure you," and accordingly gives him a few remedies. But they afford him no relief. After a few weeks he says to himself, "I do not believe this physician understands my case either." And by-and-by, after suffering nights and suffering days, his strength becomes much reduced, and there is a prospect of a speedy termination of all his earthly hopes and expectations, when he says to himself, "What a fool I am for lying, and hiding the real cause of my difficulty." He now goes to his physician again, and hangs down his head — he ought to have

hung it down before—and explains the cause of his disease, which he had so long been concealing. The physician says, "Why did you not tell me of this before? Since you have given this explanation, your difficulty is perfectly plain to me. It is very late, but I think I know now just where to put the remedy. Now I will undertake your case, and I can cure you." It is a world of relief to him that he has told the physician all he knows about his difficulty.

Now this is the foundation of the comfort of this passage. The apostle says, "Here is this God, with clear, unblemished eye, which no darkness can shroud, from which no man's thoughts can be hid, which can penetrate into the deepest recesses of man's being. There is no imagination of the mind or aspiration of the heart which he does not know. The soul and body are open and naked to his gaze, and he knows perfectly whatever takes place in connection with either. Now, then, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need." God sees every thought and motive on our part, and he knows what we need in order to obtain mercy, and find grace, and live, and, knowing all this, he says to us, "Now come—now come."

Is there, in the conception presented this morning of the Lord Jesus Christ, a view of the divine Person which comes home to you, and takes hold of your heart by sympathy? I present this Savior to you as *your* Savior. Do not look upon Christians as having a Savior while others have not. This is an entirely false idea. There is not a person in this house who has not a right to claim the Savior as his own—who has not a right to say to Christ, "Thou art mine." If you wish to do it, your wishing to do it gives you the right to do it. There is not a man, no matter how bad or wicked he is, who, if he sincerely desires the Savior to be his Savior, may not say, "Lord Jesus, thou art mine."

Are there those here who have long been wandering after, and striving to trust in a poetic, a transcendental, a vague, a

visionary God of the beautiful, but who have never found food or rest? I present to you this morning a personal God —a Father, a Friend, a sympathizing Savior—who takes you by the hand, who takes your life into his own, who loves you, and who offers to give you of his Spirit, and to lead you on from strength to strength, until you shall stand in his presence.

Ought not confession of sin and repentance before such a Being as this to be hearty—to be whole-souled? I think men sometimes commit more sin in repenting than they do in performing the sins of which they repent. They impute to God a character that is unworthy of him. They seem, from the way in which they come into his presence, to take it for granted that he is a being unworthy of all trust, suspicious, vengeful, and inexorable. But a right view of the character of God, and of his love, and kindness, and sympathy for his creatures, methinks, should bring every honorable nature straight to him, with open confession and frank faith. Where else can you go and be received with such leniency and such grandeur of love as he feels and manifests toward his children?

But there are persons who are timid in such matters, because they are more conscious of their self-pollution or deficiency than of the riches and glory of God's nature. Now I ask, ought not this view of God which I have held up before you this morning to be encouraging to you to come boldly to the throne of grace, and to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need? Do not wait till you have seen more of your own heart; you have seen enough of it already if you have had one look at it. Do not brood upon your own sinfulness. Look up and see the glory and goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ought it not to be easy for every true and generous nature to consecrate all his affections, all his powers and faculties, his friends, his children—every thing—to the service of such a being as this? And if his providence in this world is the

way in which God reveals his will to us, ought it not to be easy for us to be submissive to that providence? Nature is very strong when we lose our children, our companions, the things in which our strength stands in this world; but it ought not to be difficult for us to give up every thing to such a Savior as I have presented to you, and say, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

Are there any in this congregation who have hitherto experienced feelings of attachment for the Savior, but who are to-day conscious that they are not in intimate connection with him? What do these flowers on the desk before me make you think of? Look at them. Do you know that it is a year to-day since flowers, large and small, beautiful in form and fragrant in their nature, crowded this platform, before which those hundreds were to be received into this church? They were heralds of joy. This is the anniversary of your bridal Sabbath. I think there is not one of you that can now look upon this platform without being reminded of the events of that day, the blessedness and the joys of which you will never forget. Twelve months have gone past. Where are you now? What has been that year's experience? I know how some of you have reeled to and fro, going zigzag in your way of life.

Now if your year has not been what you meant to have it; if you are filled with confusion and shame on account of your backsliding; if you are obliged to say, "My love to God has burned out," or, "It is like a burnt brand by the fireside of my heart," then is not this the day, and is not this the place, and is not this the subject that should bring you back again from your wanderings and infidelity to the love, and sympathy, and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, your Savior? He has been here every Sabbath waiting for you, and he is here to-day especially in these external symbols. He sends me to say to you, "Come."

Is there any one here who says, "Lord Jesus, I have not been to thy table since the first day I took communion

here?" To you more than to any others, because you need his sympathy more, he reaches out his hand, and says, "Let me draw you back to me." Are there some here who say, "I have trampled under foot the blood of the covenant; I have done despite to the grace of God, and there is no help for me?" Oh! say not so. Do not despair. The Lord has not permitted you to wander so far from him that you have sacrificed your soul's salvation. If you have been sinful, if you have stumbled and fallen, I am empowered to invite you, because you are sinful, and because you are fallen, to come back to him whose love for you is so great that it overmeasures all thought of your sinfulness. Your salvation does not stand in your goodness, but in the power and glory of him who loves you, and will love you unto the end.

PRAYER.

We bless thy name, thou eternal Father, that thou hast made known to us, through thy Son, our Savior, that there is in this new and living way full access to thee. Now all that it is possible for us to understand of God is made known in Christ. He is brought near to us, becoming a man; suffering as we suffer; tempted in all points like as we are, and yet without sin; speaking to us in our own tongue; doing the deeds that we must do, and walking the passes through which we must tread. How strange that thou hast thus brought down the love of the Godhead, and interpreted it, translated it, not by words alone, but by an outflowing life. Ever-blessed Savior, thou crowned One, now a Prince exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, we hail and bless thee as our sovereign Lord, our hearts' rest, our joy, our hope, our all! When we were lying dead, thou didst come to be our life, and to bring us forth by thy sovereign touch and reviving power. When we walked in darkness, thou didst come over the top of the hills, and hang as the bright and morning star; nor didst thou change till the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings, pouring daylight on our path. When in the toil of the day we could not bear the wilting, withering power of the sun, thou wert pleased to declare thyself to be for us the shadow of a great

rock in a weary land. When we are faint with hunger, and have no whither to go, then thou art to us the bread of life. And when we are sick, and know not how to restore ourselves, unnursed and untended, thou drawest near to us to proclaim that thou art the Physician, and that in thee is healing and remedy. When we are poor and needy, then thou tellest us that thou art wealth for us—our exceeding great reward. Thou art our raiment, and we are clothed with thee. Thou art our road, and we tread along that sacred way to divine realms in heaven. Thou art all to all. What need have we that points heavenward; what necessity have we in our life; what do we lack in body or in soul, for which thou hast not made amazing provision in nature or in grace? And we are beloved of thee. Revolving as we are amid innumerable creatures transcending in number all our thought or capacity of thinking, we are never forgotten. How precious to us are thy thoughts, O God!

We rejoice in thee. What are we when we think of God? How small the sum of our life; of how little account do we seem to ourselves in the great thronged whirl of divine affairs! The earth, which is but as a cup in thy hand, might be emptied, and none know it but the heart of God. So full of goodness and love art thou that not a sparrow can fall and thou not feel it. Not one of all thy creatures can suffer without thy knowing it. Of all the poor and the despised; of all the ignorant and heathen; of all the outcast; of all those that wander amid dreary superstitions and besotted services, there is not one so wicked, so low, so brutal, that thou dost not think of him, and dost not feel in his heart lying against thine the throb of beginning immortality. What are the ways through which thou wilt lead men, and what are the mysteries of thy dealings in providence with them, we do not know. Why should we expect to know God and his ways? But we rejoice in that great disclosure which thou hast made to us through Jesus Christ, that man has not come forth separated from thee, but that he is thy child. All men are thine, and thou art the unforgetting Father. And now we rejoice in this truth of God. We cling to it. If we take measures of safety from what we see in ourselves; if our hope is in our own potency for good; if it is because we have attained righteousness that we are to be saved, if saved at all, then we are of all men most miserable; for we are only advanced enough to take a higher rule of condemnation, and to feel how obscure are our highest thoughts, and how impure are our best feelings. In all things

we come short, and in many we entirely fail. We are sinful in character, in feeling, in deed, in action, and in disposition. And if it was only ourselves that stood underneath ourselves, we should have no hope and no courage; or, if we thought that thou wert saving us for the good that is in us, we should fear the daily and hourly disclosure of our lives before thee. But thou knowest thine own work, and thou hast been pleased to take us up into thine arms as we take little children, knowing that they are children; knowing their weakness, and inexperience, and faults; knowing their transgressions, and yet loving them. We do not expect that they will grow up without sin, but we love them. We expect that they will vex and harass our lives, but we love them. We love them all the more as we think they need us by reason of their delinquency.

O God, is this that is written in our heart a revelation of thy truth? and dost thou love us as sinful creatures? Dost thou love us because, being sinful, we need thee? Dost thou take us in our littleness and weakness? and art thou making thyself unto us righteousness, sanctification, justification? We rejoice, we hope, we trust and believe.

And now what can harm us? If God be for us, who can be against us? What arrow can wing its way through thy shield? What temptation can spring, lion-like, to crush us, and crush thee, thou Lion of the tribe of Judah? In thee we are strong—in thy fidelity; in thy remembrance; in thy love; in thy watchful care. Ourselves we commit to thee. We commit more than ourselves—we commit our children and our dear friends. We commit more than our heart—we commit those that are dearer than our own life. We commend ourselves and ours to thee, not for time alone. We trust for prosperity, under thy wisdom and guidance; but, O Lord God, we trust thy faithfulness also for dying. Thou wilt not forsake us in the trying hour. When heart and flesh shall fail, thou wilt not fail. And as in that hour friends recede, and we drift farther and farther from their voices on the shore, thou wilt open the ears of our spirit to hear unutterable things in heaven. We will trust thee in the judgment, when thou shalt appear, with all thy blessed angels, to separate between the good and the bad, and when, if left alone, we should shrink in our inmost parts with fear, and shrivel before the light of thy countenance. In that great hour of division and sentence, Almighty God, we will lay our hand upon the promise and upon the Savior, and plead for his sake. And thou wilt accept us; thou wilt do it for thine own sake.

Great is the mystery of the love of God to sinful souls. And when we shall stand gathered out of all our sorrow, and temptation, and sin, out of all mortal fears and struggles, and out of death itself, having come forth victorious, then in thy presence, with all whom we love, we will cast our crowns at thy feet, saying, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, be the praise of our salvation forever and ever." Amen.

XXIII.

Fishers of Men.

Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sabbath morning, February 18th, 1866.

Fishers of Men.

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."—Matt., iv., 18, 19.

God's whole work in this world aims at the development of man. He is not only highest in the scale of earthly creatures, but all other things have their rank and use by their relations to him. Except for man's development and advancement, natural laws, seasons, and all the flow of phenomena would be but as the flowing of the Gulf Stream, or the crashing of Polar ice in the solitary nights of Northern winters.

In the divine economy all influences are laboring together for him. All science and art, all political economy and good government, all growth of refinement and of good morals, all that is involved in civilization, directly or indirectly, promotes the welfare and advancement of man. Not only are certain official persons appointed to affect him by truth, but it is the whole office of human society to teach him. Not only is the Church an appointed instrumentality, but time and the world are instrumentalities. All things work *for* him; all things work *upon* him. In a general sense, it may be said that the whole globe is an organized institution designed to educate men. But in this general economy some influences act indirectly and remotely, some very directly. While great influences are taking hold of men in masses, there is a provision also for special action upon individuals; and in this work of producing individual impressions on individual men,

there is no instrumentality that can compare with the heart of a Christian man. Seasons do much, directly or indirectly. Natural laws have their ministrations, and should not be overlooked. National economies, customs, occupations, and providential events of joy or of sorrow—these are all working mightily and working always. But there comes that in their midst which is mightier than all of them, namely, the throb of one heart against another. Of all earthly things that influence men, God has made the human heart to be the master influence, that can do what nothing else can do. And when this special human instrumentality acts harmoniously with and within these general influences, man is brought under the highest conceivable degree of human moral influence.

The Christian religion differs in this one thing, grandly and fundamentally, from all other religious systems. It has, indeed, its system of truth or theology to be believed, and its code of ethics to be obeyed and practiced, the value of which can not be overestimated. But over and above any natural laws, economies, institutions, customs, and ordinances, it is the distinctive peculiarity of the Christian religion that it has introduced the heart-power of a personal being as the grand master influence by which men are to be moved.

It is the personal influence of God in Christ upon the hearts of men that makes the Gospel the power of God unto salvation. Its grand and fundamental feature consists in the fact that it introduces into life, and to the experience of men, a living, throbbing, personal God of love and power. And as this personal influence constitutes the characteristic power in Christianity, so, in accordance with this spirit, all Christians are empowered and commanded to exert their own personal influence for the conversion and edification of men—not as an occasional duty; not as an exceptional duty resting only upon professional priests and ministers, but as one of the constituent elements of Christian character, one of the signs of Christian allegiance, and one of the chief of human

forces upon which Christ relies in building up and extending his kingdom.

Christ himself, our great exemplar and leader, labored with men individually; for while he preached God to men publicly, he also influenced them privately and personally. He not only exerted a professional influence upon them as a prophet and teacher, but he eminently and most beautifully exerted a personal influence upon them as a companion and friend. And he called his disciples to the very same work.

"Follow me," he says to these fishermen—(and you might have known, if you waked up in Asia and heard that passage, that it emanated from Christ. It has internal evidence of having been uttered by him; for he had a peculiar habit of drawing instruction and knowledge from the symbolisms of nature and the events of life. Every thing to him taught something. And, seeing these men in the ship, and perceiving that they were fishermen, he said)—"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"—I will enlarge your business. The more you look at this figure the more important it becomes.

To fish well, it is necessary to study the peculiarities of fish. It is necessary to know more than the science of ichthyology. What a book can tell a man about fishes is worth knowing, but it is little that a book can do toward making a man a true fisherman. If a man is going to fish for *fish*, he must become their scholar before he becomes their master; he must go to school to the brook to learn its ways. And to fish for men, a man must learn their nature, their prejudices, their tendencies, and their courses. A man, to catch fish, must not only know their habits, but their tastes and their resorts; he must humor them according to their different natures, and adapt his instruments to their peculiarities, providing a spear for some, a hook for others, a net for others, and baits for each one as each one will. To sit on a bank or deck, and say to the fishes, "Here I am, authorized to command you to come to me and to bite what I give you,"

is just as ridiculous as it can be, even though it does resemble some ways of preaching. The Christian's business is not to stand in an appointed place and say to men, "Here am I; come up and take what I give you as you should." The Christian's business is to find out what men are, and to take them by that which they will bite at.

You must go *to* the fish. They certainly will not come to you. You must note times and seasons. You must be informed as to their caprices. You must creep sometimes, lie down sometimes, sometimes hide, sit patiently in the leafy covert at other times, and work frequently without filling your basket, and await a better time. You must study the sky, and for their food you must search all manner of insects, and every thing that relates to the work in which you are engaged. The one act of catching fish must determine your whole manner.

Luke adds to the force of this figure very much. Matthew says, "Ye shall be fishers of men;" but Luke says, "Ye shall *catch* men." It is very well to be a fisher, but it is a great deal better to catch what you fish for.

It will be my object, in farther discoursing this morning, first, to enforce the duty of labors for the edification and conversion of men; next, to point out some of the means by which we should attempt to do it; and, finally, to direct the whole to some personal applications.

What, then, is the source of this duty of laboring for men's conversion, and their education in the Christian life after their conversion? The duty begins in this: "Freely ye have received, freely give." This applies to every truly Christian man. God has thought of him personally; God has given the Holy Ghost to rest upon him; Christ has loved him and drawn him unto himself. And every man that is truly a Christian is one who has been the object of special personal divine thought, and love, and transforming influence. The same that he has done to us he commands us to do to others. Not that we are clothed with the same attributes, nor

that we have the same official relations; but as God, according to his sphere and nature, adapts himself to the wants of every individual heart, so we, according to our sphere and nature, are to adapt ourselves to the wants of the individual hearts that are about us.

Our obligations, then, to Christ for our own salvation, and the possession of Christ's spirit of sympathy and love—these are the grounds on which men ought to labor for their fellow-men. Hence, though parents, teachers, and ministers are expected to labor on account of professional reasons, the root of the obligation is not that we are parents, or teachers, or ministers, but that we are *Christians*. If a man, being a Christian, and acknowledging this duty, finds himself possessed either of opportunities or gifts which make it specially important that he should devote his life to this one work, that may be a reason why he should become a minister; but because he is a minister is not the reason why he should labor for the individual welfare of men. The reason why we are bound to use our life for the benefit of our fellow-men is that we are in Christ, and that he says, "Freely ye have received from me, freely give." And while it is true that every parent, every teacher, every one that is put in relations of influence and authority with others is bound to accept those relations as providential, and as affording an opportunity for the exercise of a gift or power in fulfillment of the obligation growing out of personal faith and love to Christ Jesus, we ought not to consider this obligation as springing originally and chiefly from any external or superficial reason, or from any professional relation. It is because you are a *Christian* that the obligation rests upon you.

This reason makes the duty, then, of all Christians substantially the same. It may be that some have better adaptations and better opportunities than others. That may be a reason why some should do more than others, but it is not a reason why some should not do any thing. Every man has some power, and is under obligation to the Master to ex-

ert it. If you have ten talents, you are responsible for ten; if you have five, you are responsible for five; and cursed be the man that, having but one, wraps it in a napkin, and digs a hole and buries it. If a man, being a professional man, can do more than you, it does not justify you in not doing the little that you can do. The obligation is not professional, but moral. To live days, and months, and years without personal solicitude and personal effort for some individual soul is a sign so bad as to invalidate the evidence of piety. I know many persons will say, "That is an offensive way of putting this obligation. Are there not other methods of usefulness? Is not teaching important? I am a teacher of the truth and its relations to religious conduct; my habits incline me to build up the great systems of truth; and I am working for the welfare of men, not individually indeed, but in the mass." I do not say a word against this departmental way of working. Influences that are comprehensive, intricate, and remote, are good. But the fact that you may be giving yourself mainly to this form of work does not release you from the duty of performing personal and individual labor. You must have somebody to love, and watch over, and sympathize with. Every single heart should have its part in this great, common, universal, individual, and personal duty of acting upon others for their religious growth, as God acted on you for yours.

This being the grand duty and its foundation, let us speak, then, next, of the methods. Do not think that I am going merely to urge the duty of going out and talking to impenitent sinners. Talking is only one method of influence. Many of you might not converse to edification. Talking? Is the tongue the only servant of the heart? Must the heart send just that one servant for all errands? Wretched heart, if it is so poorly served as that! But the ways of the heart are almost infinite. Its instrumentalities and devices are almost numberless. Let it speak when it is best to speak; but I urge upon you personal influence, not simply

the influence of speech. Talking does not set you free from doing other and mightier things—things that will tax your attention and your time. Let me specify.

First. In the very beginning, as a preparation for any influence upon our fellow-men, there must be cultivated in us a sympathy with and a desire for them. The heart is to be a fountain out of which our thoughts and feelings flow toward others. Do you say, "I am ready to go out and call men to come in to the feast?" But stop! Do you care yourself for men? Have you ever been inspired by the Holy Ghost to feel for them? Is your heart drawn toward them? Are they to you something more than mere secular actors in time and political society? Do you recognize them as your own kindred? Do you recognize their immortality? Do you think of them as belonging, above all, to Christ? Does your soul yearn toward your fellow-men as brethren—as, with you, children of God?

Honesty, uprightness, kindness, generosity, these are well; but they are not equivalents in the sight of God for a loving heart, for true sympathy with man as a creature of God, an heir of eternity, imperiled, lost, and to be redeemed by some power that is to be exerted upon him. This inherent sympathy is the beginning. You might just as well, when the street-lamps are burning, and the street is full of light, attempt to veil that light, as to attempt so to veil a heart full of love and sympathy for man and for Christ that it shall not show itself in the gestures and tones, and fill the life full of sweet and blessed activity. You must feel and pray for men with a kind—if I may so call it—of maternal instinct. You are to win them; you are to catch them; you are to hunt them. They are the true game of love. You are to find in studying them, even in their perversities, something that shall fill you with deep interest.

Not easy places, and not easy men, are the true preacher's ambition. It should be with us as with true sportsmen, who rejoice in searching out the shy and cunning fish, in tempting

the most wary to take the hook, and who glory in a fish that sturdily refuses to be taken, but resists to the last, and is landed only after long and skillful handling of the tackle. A sullen mud-fish he may take, if he can do no better. But he covets difficulty. He searches the country. He knows every pool and covert. He makes himself acquainted with the very fancies and whims of his game. He never thinks of standing upon his dignity. He knows that he must make himself the servant of trout if he will catch trout—that he must go down *to* the sea, and not wait for the waters to come after him. He lies down. He creeps. He watches and waits. He studies the wind and weather. He submits himself to every inconvenience cheerfully if he may thereby win.

There are a great many men that like to preach among good folks; that like to talk to people that are already in the kingdom, or that need but a word to be brought in. But the spirit of our text requires that a man should go among unwilling and wicked men, pursue them, and catch them. There ought to be for a man nothing more manly than to attack men; to put his eye on them, and study them, as a merchant does his customer, to see how much he can make out of him: not as an antagonist, to see whether he can match men or overmaster them, but as a Christian fisherman, saying, "How can I bring to bear on them something to check their downward career, and save them from ruin?" You put your eye on a man, and study him, and try one thing, and miss him; you study him again, and try another thing, and miss him again; you pray over him, and carry him home with you, and live and sleep with him constantly in your mind; you watch your game; and at length you begin to make an impression upon him. And then you experience an ecstasy, a joy that is unutterable. You concentrate other influences upon him—fail with some, and succeed with others; at last you land him, and the thrill of triumph is more glorious than that experienced by a buffalo-hunter, a lion-killer, or a fisherman! To land a man, and land him,

not on the shores of streams that will run out, but on the shores of streams where there shall be no more lapse and flow, is glorious indeed.

Consider the apostle's method of training for this work.

"Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

Can you conceive of a more magnificent description of the universal adaptation of the total of a man's being to this great work of saving men? Sympathy, love, time, talent, official character and position—these are all mere instruments by which he is seeking this one most glorious end of which the heart of man can conceive—the redemption of human souls from death. Some persons—frivolous natures they must be—have seen in this passage evidence of a want of principle. They understand the apostle's declaration to be that he would do any thing if he could gain his ends; that he would do evil that good might come. It is not so. The apostle says, "I study men under every circumstance in which I find them. If they are heathen, I will see if there is not some point of sympathy between them and me. If I find that they are Jews, there are some points in which I can sympathize with a Jew, and I will take those points, and from them I will work to bring him into a higher and better sphere. Wherever I am, whether among barbarians or Jews, my first thought is, 'How can I get hold of these men, and draw them out of their evil life into a higher and better one?' All my time, and power, and inspiration, and

prophetic and apostolic office, I use in my endeavors to gain men." That was the whole of his life; and is there any thing nobler than such a life? No artist that has left gallery or statues, no builder that has left cathedrals or palaces, can compare with that man who has filled the heaven so full of redeemed souls as has the Apostle Paul.

Then, next, when we have this deep feeling preparatory to the work, and this training for it, we are to use every practicable instrument for carrying it on; not that which others use, but that which we find to be pertinent to us.

In some respects laymen can perform this personal labor better than ministers; and neighbors can do some things for children better than parents themselves can. What men are officially appointed to do they often do from mere habit or a sense of duty. Accordingly, children are often led to feel that their parents govern them because it is their duty to do it. And there come exigences in children's lives when they are impatient of authority at home, and when, if they are sent away from home to school, they will take the same amount of government patiently, without resistance. A person outside of the family can sometimes influence a child when its parent can exert but little influence upon it. And there are a multitude of instances where laymen can do what no minister can. The minister is a professional man, and people say, "His attention to me is not an evidence of his personal sympathy for me, but a matter of business." I stand here on Sunday, and preach to men, and my influence upon them is diminished by the fact that I am appointed to do it. They say, "He is hired, and the message which he delivers to us is not his own message of love. He is paid, and he labors among us on that account." A man at the bank hands you the money for your check. It is ten thousand dollars, and it is going to save you from bankruptcy. But you do not account him a benefactor. You express not a word of gratitude to him. He is the cashier; you hand him the check, and he pays you the money; he does not care for

you, and you do not care for him. It is his business to hand you the money, and he does it, and that is all there is of it. And so men seem to think of a minister, salaried and appointed to stand in the pulpit and dispense the Gospel, that he does it professionally and as a matter of course. A business friend whose life is consistent, and whom you believe to be a good man, comes to you and says, "My friend, I do not believe any body will tell you what you ought to know; but the fact is, you are becoming hard and selfish; you are becoming sharp and grasping. I feel it, and your friends all feel it. Probably nobody would have said this to you if I had not, and I never told it to a soul but you, and I never would have said it to you if I had not been your friend. Now do not be angry with me, but just think about it." He will give heed to *him*. But if I should go to you with like message, saying, "Sir, do not you know that you are getting very worldly and very hard?" you would think to yourself, "Oh, yes, my minister gets a good salary, and feels that he has a duty to perform;" but what effect would it have? When a man who is not paid a salary to teach you your duty, and whom you do not expect to do it, comes to you and concerns himself in your welfare, there is a freshness about it that does not belong to mere professional service. The general feeling of men is, "Let every one take care of his own business." It is very hard to tell a disagreeable truth to a friend; and when a man makes the self-sacrifice to do it, you feel it. And so an officer can help an officer as a minister can not; a business man can help a business man as a professional man can not; a poor man can do what a rich man can not; an ignorant man can do what a learned man can not. There is not a man, though he is not a minister, that has not power to accomplish great results in this way. There is an opening for laymen to do this work that can be filled by none but such.

This is not all. We are to remember that we have derived almost all our Church customs from periods previous

to the Reformation in England. Before that time the clergy, as a body, though they were intelligent compared with their hearers, were so ignorant that they would not now be considered worthy to be intrusted with any holy function. And if the clergy were but little cultured, how much worse must have been the condition of their parishioners? At that time, when the masses of men were in such a low state, a thousand things were expected to be done by professional men, because nobody else could do them. But there have been many steps of progress in Christianity since that time. Intelligence has spread. In a majority of Christian families parents are better able to instruct the young, a thousand fold, than ministers. In this Church there are many persons that are qualified to explain the Scriptures and disseminate the Gospel among their fellow-men as few ministers in the olden time were qualified to do. Under such circumstances, for you to wait for professional men to do all the talking and preaching is an abuse of your privileges, and a neglect of the higher duties which belong to you in the time in which you live.

I roll no burdens off from my own shoulders; I would fain work to the end of my life. I live to work, and pray that, as God's best gift to me, when I can not work any more, I may die at once. I desire to fall in the harness. But you are waiting for ministers and churches to do the work that God has given you to do, while you are intelligent enough, and have opportunities and means enough to do it. God's solemn obligation rests on you, and your whole soul calls out for gratitude which you can express only by helping those that are in need. You are to watch and work for men, and ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do?"

But the best of all labor is that which is co-operative. Where the Church provides all the necessary instrumentalities of instruction, and the minister works for individuals and the whole congregation, and his members, co-operating, work with him, the combined labor of him and them is better than their working alone, or his working alone.

Christian brethren, I feel at this time as though I needed help. I need help always, of course—help in my heart and disposition, which you can not give me, but God can. But I need help from you. I need that while I preach you should be ready to co-operate. Do you believe that for the last two months there has been one single sermon preached in this house, morning or evening, when there have not been men present who did not gravitate more strongly toward a Christian life than ever before? Have there not been backsliders powerfully moved to be restored? Have there not been young men that felt, "I ought to turn about?" Have there not been scores of men whose eyes were wet with tears? Now I can not follow them, and you can not all of them; but if your heart was running over with love to Christ and men, could you not take one day in the week to labor for others? We have some seventeen hundred members in this Church, and suppose one half of them gave a portion of their time to Christian work, may we not at least calculate, with entire moderation, that each of them might be the instrument of bringing one soul a year into the Church? According to that estimate, there would be eight hundred conversions among us annually. But let us make it smaller, and suppose that one third of the members did it, and call the membership fifteen hundred, then there would be five hundred added to the Church during every period of twelve months. And do you not believe that, if you were to go into it as you do into your business, you might at least bring in one, if not more than that?

My dear Christian brethren, by the love that you bear to Christ, and that he bears to you, are you doing what you ought to do for the salvation of men around about you? Bringing it nearer, are you doing it in your store, and with your employés? Are you doing it in friendship? Let me bring it nearer still. Parents, are there not children who only want the concentrated glow of your faith and love to lead them into the fold of Christ? Are there not compan-

ions who are united in blissful love, and who yet are separated forever? And when you clasp your dearest love, is there not between you a gulf as wide as the space between heaven and earth—one being Christ's and the other not? Is there no call for thought or consideration in this matter?

Dearly beloved Christian brethren, I do not ask you to wake up to a paroxysm of zeal, that shall rush as streams do in the spring when the snows melt on the mountain, and shall then subside as streams do in the summer, leaving their beds dry and barren. I ask you to rise to a higher conception of your duty in Christ to those that are around about you. I do not say that you ought to preach; I do not say that you ought to talk; but I say that there ought to be something in your Christian life that shall act as a personal influence on the hearts of those with whom you have to do. It may be that you can not talk. I have known persons that could not, who exerted a more powerful influence than others that could. You may touch persons at almost any point, so that you inspire them with a confidence that you are sincere. Do not go as an authoritative man. Every one of us likes to be pope. Do not go dictatorially. It is not for us to dictate this, that, or the other duty to men. Our business is to win men. It is to use love, and gentleness, and patience, and self-denial, in gaining men. It is to employ our example in such a manner as to guide them in the right way. It is to speak when we can do good by speaking, and keep silence when we can not. It is not to be ashamed of Christ, but to stand up for him. It is to watch for your opportunities, and take the young man the next day after his debauch, while his conscience is up in arms against him, and endeavor to convince him of the error of his ways. When rains begin, when the streams are dark-faced, and the clouds hang low and are dripping, and the sky is lowering, then is the time, as fishermen well know, for fishing. And when the clouds of life hang low, and men are sick, and in trouble, and need help, then step in and be their friend, and soothe

them, and help them. Be ye ready. There are ten thousand opportunities. All that is wanting is that you should have a heart to improve the opportunities and make use of the means.

Now Christ says to every one of you, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Is there any thing worth living for more than such a mission? It is good for a man to write a book. A book will live, and shall have no sexton; but he himself will soon die, and be laid away. A book is an invention by which men live after they are dead so far as this world is concerned. A hymn or song that deserves to live is lifted above persecution. The tyrant or despot can not touch it. But oh! neither book, nor hymn, nor song, nor any product of the human mind, is to be compared with the immortal life itself; and ye that save one soul, and lift it, by the power of your instrumentality, blessed of God, into the sphere of immortality and glory, shall shine as the stars in the firmament! Such achievements will be a source of more joy, when you stand in Zion and before God, than all the treasures of the world. For when death comes, not your ships, not your store-houses, not your piles of gold, not your reputation among your fellow-citizens, not even the joys of the future state, if you could rise and see them in the light of eternity, would you value in comparison with the satisfaction of having been permitted to save one soul.

Some of you are just beginning life. Learn early that to help others is to bless yourself! Your joy is bound up in others' benefit. Some of you are in the midst of life. I do not ask you to lay aside your profession or your trade that you may preach the Gospel. Some men, perhaps, might well become preachers. One of the most eminent lawyers in Boston, who was lately converted, has given himself to the work of preaching the Gospel, and he promises to be as useful, if not more useful, than many of the ministers of that city. I think it is glorious for men, when they have made enough to live on, to say; "I am satisfied, and now I will de-

vote all my time to my fellow-men." I like to see men rising from lower to higher spheres of activity. But most of you will go on in your present spheres. Go on, then, as you are; but remember that there is somebody at your hand that needs succor which you can give. All you need is consecration; all you want is God with you; your greatest need is a holy heart, a real love, an honest purpose, a manly disposition to save men. God will give you the opportunity.

Some of you are drawing near to the end of life. Take one more companion along toward heaven with you. There are many of you that, if you could look into heaven, would see waiting for you a part of that host that shall throng the gate, and give you a choral entrance into the Celestial City. You have saved many souls; but are you satisfied not to save one more? No man ever hunted that he did not want to take yet more game, though his bag was full. No man ever fished in the brook that he did not want to catch one more fish. You are coming to the last turn in the brook. Throw again. You can not carry up too many souls for Christ.

Brethren, our time is near at hand. Some of you will never meet here again. Some of you will never hear me preach again. But in the judgment day, at that hour when we stand before the throne, one thought, one feeling, will rise above every other—that which relates to God and eternity. Live, then, as in that hour you will wish you had lived.

XXIV.

A Conversation about Christ.

The following Discourse was delivered by Mr. Beecher on the eve of his departure for Europe, as a familiar Lecture to his own people, on Wednesday evening, May 27th, 1863, in the Lecture-room of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn.

A Conversation about Christ.

"And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them."—Luke, xxiv., 13–15.

We are not exactly like this band of disciples, and yet we are a disciple-band. We are not walking in the midst of the same troubles and disasters which had overshadowed them, and yet we are in some sense walking together in the twilight and in the evening. And it is very fit that we should talk one with another; not, as they did, of disappointed hopes and expectations, but of hopes fulfilled and of expectations realized.

I want, then, to speak to-night only a little, but that little I desire to speak of the sacred name of Christ, who is my life, my inspiration, my hope, and my surety. I can not help stopping and looking back upon the past. It is thrust upon me every day again and again; and my personal and experimental life, in some sense, is separated from my current experience. I look at it almost as a thing that has had nothing to do with me, and that belongs to some other one. And I wish, as if I had never done it before, to bear witness to-night, not only that it is by the grace of God, but that it is by the grace of God *as manifested in Christ Jesus*, that I am what I am. I recognize the sublimity and grandeur of the revelation of God in his eternal fatherhood as one that made the heavens, that founded the earth, and that regards all the tribes

of the earth, comprehending them in one universal mercy; but it is the God that is manifested in Jesus Christ, revealed by his life, made known by the inflections of his feeling, by his discourse, and by his deeds—it is that God that I desire to confess to-night, and of whom I desire to say, "By the love of God in Christ Jesus I am what I am."

If you ask me precisely what I mean by that, I say, frankly, that, more than any recognized influence of my father or my mother upon me; more than the social influence of all the members of my father's household; more, so far as I can trace it, or so far as I am made aware of it, than all the social influences of every kind, Christ has had the formation of my mind and of my disposition. My hidden ideals of what is beautiful I have drawn from Christ. My thoughts of what is manly, and noble, and pure, have almost all of them arisen from the Lord Jesus Christ. Many men have educated themselves by reading Plutarch's Lives of the Ancient Worthies, and setting before themselves one and another of those that in different ages have achieved celebrity; and they have recognized the great power of these men on themselves. Now I do not perceive that poet, or philosopher, or reformer, or general, or any other great man, ever has dwelt in my imagination and in my thought as the simple Jesus has. For more than twenty-five years I instinctively have gone to Christ to draw a measure and a judgment for every thing. Have my passions arisen? I have instinctively drawn from my thought of Christ some ideal, some rule. And I have not simply asked myself, "What does he command?" My perfect conception of manhood is presented in Christ. Whenever there has been a necessity for it, I have sought—and at last almost spontaneously—to throw myself into the companionship of Christ; and early, by my imagination, I could see him standing and looking quietly and lovingly upon me. There seemed almost to drop from his face an influence upon me that suggested what was the right thing in the controlling of passion, in the subduing of pride, in the

overcoming of selfishness; and it is from Christ, manifested to my inward eye, that I have consciously derived more ideals, more models, more influences, than from any human character whatever.

We all of us go out in our thoughts after a hero. I have found my hero always in Christ; for I have not thought of him as a quietist, as many have, nor have I thought of him as a pietist alone, as many have. My Christ loved flowers, and talked about them. My Christ watched birds, and knew about them. My Christ was a Lamb, but he was also a Lion of the tribe of Judah. He furnished the fullest conception of greatness and nobleness of character. Every ideal that I have had of true manhood was comprehended in him. And I bear witness that not from Washington, nor Franklin, nor the Puritans, nor from reformers, nor philosophers, nor from men that have achieved in different spheres, have I drawn much or many things, but that by the grace of God in Christ Jesus I am what I am.

This is not all. I feel conscious that I have derived from the Lord Jesus Christ every thought that makes heaven a reality to me, and every thought that paves the road that lies between me and heaven. All my conceptions of the progress of grace in the soul; all the steps by which divine life is evolved; all the ideals that overhang the blessed sphere which awaits us beyond this world—these are derived from the Savior. The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God. He loved me. He gave himself for me. He has borne with me since I came into discipleship; how much none of you know; how much I myself do not know. I should have lain heavy on his hands if those hands had not been omnipotent in love; but he has carried me very easily, and so long that I sometimes think that he has forgotten that he is carrying me at all. It is by the grace of God in Christ Jesus that I am what I am in all my aspirations and in all my hopes.

That is not all. Much as my future includes all those ele-

ments which go to make the blessed fabric of earthly life, yet, after all, what in summer the sun is compared with all its earthly products — flowers, and leaves, and grass — that is Christ compared with all the products of Christ in my mind and in my soul. All the flowers and leaves of sympathy; all the twining joys that come from my heart as a Christian — these I take and hold in the future, but they are to me what the flowers and the leaves of summer are compared with the sun that makes the summer. Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, of my better life.

When I read the Bible, I gather a great deal from the Old Testament, and from the Pauline portions of the New Testament; but, after all, I am conscious that the fruit of the Bible is Christ. The rest to me is just what leaves are on an apple-tree. When I see the apple I know that there must have been a tree to bear that fruit; but after that I think of the fruit, and nothing else. Here grew that old, broad-branched tree through thousands of years, that it might bear fruit — the fruit Christ Jesus; and now, seeing the fruit, I do not think of the root, the trunk, the bough, or the leaves. Though I know that they are there, and that they are valuable, yet it is the Christ that is born that I think of. And the whole of the Old and the New Testaments is to me simply this: Christ formed in man the hope of glory. That is what I read for, and that is what I find that is worth reading.

In preaching, even in sermons in which I have scarcely mentioned the name of Christ, down deeper than every thing else has been, first, the sense of what was becoming toward him; and then, next, has been a desire to please him. I have had a hunger, brethren, to be loved of Christ. You all know, in some relations, what it is to be hungry for love. Your heart seems unsatisfied till you can draw something more toward you from those that are dearest to you. There have been times when I have had an unspeakable heart-hunger for Christ's love. My sense of sin is never strong when I think of the law; my sense of sin is strong when I think of love—

if there is any difference between law and love. It is when drawing near to the Lord Jesus Christ, and longing to be loved, that I have the most vivid sense of unsymmetry, of imperfection, of absolute unworthiness, and of my sinfulness. Character and conduct are never so vividly set before me as when in silence I bend in the presence of Christ, revealed, not in wrath, but in love to me. I never so much long to be lovely, that I may be loved, as when I have this revelation of Christ before my mind. And in my preaching, this lies back of thinking and back of purpose. Even ethical sermons, after all, in my own mind, have this as their beginning. The impulse is from this subtle undertone. All the instructions that I have tried to give you have been instructions that would reveal more and more perfectly in you, and to you, this same thought of Christ that has been so much to me.

I can also say that although I have been called, in the providence of God, to do a great deal of work in other directions, no part of my ministerial labor has ever been more stimulating or more delightful, and no part of it in remembrance is now more refreshing, than that which has led me to implant, one by one, in the hearts of my people, the hopes, the sympathies, the loves, and the joys that centre in Christ Jesus, or that which has consisted in awakening men to look up and see what Christ has been and is toward them. The leading of men by the hand into communion with the Savior; the firing of their hearts with a holy zeal; the attempt to reproduce the life of Christ in their life—this part of my ministerial career now comes up to me as the most precious and the most refreshing. After preaching over twenty-five years—and among you during the greatest number of those years—in looking back upon my experience, that part of my life which stands out, and which I remember most vividly, is just that part that has had some conscious association with Christ. All the rest is pale and thin, and lies like a cloud on the horizon. I remember so much of my life in

the ministry as has been full of Christ, and almost all the rest I have forgotten. Doctrines, systems, measures, methods—what may be called the necessary mechanical and external part of worship; the more obvious part; the part which the senses would recognize—this seems to have withered and fallen off like the leaves of last summer; but that part which has taken hold of Christ remains, abides.

The same thing is true in respect to my sermons. I generally forget my sermons as soon as they are delivered; but there are some of them that I never forget. I have observed very distinctly that those sermons which make the most impression on me afterward are those which are the most fragrant of the life and nature of Christ.

I look forward more and more, of course, every year to dying. Death is no longer a disagreeable topic to me. On the contrary, life is not half so attractive as it once was. I suppose I know just how an apple-stem feels when the apple is ripe and ready to fall. It feels all the time that the apple is letting go. And I feel many fibres of my stem letting go. Sometimes I have been almost superstitious in the thought that the emotions which I have experienced in this regard were foretokens and indications of approaching dissolution. If it be so, blessed be God. It is better to depart and be with Christ, than to live even here and with you. I can not conceive any ministerial life to be more happy or to be more eminently favored than mine has been—than mine is. If there is any other place that can be better than such a one as mine, surely it must be heaven, where Christ is in all his glory. . . .

I look forward with increasing joy. To me death is utterly unterrible. The future that lies beyond it becomes less and less dark and obscure, and heaven becomes more and more rich. The path before me is all the way full of Christ. The threshold of the sacred precinct; the whole vast domain of the future—it is all Christ to my thought. I rejoice in it. So it has been even in sorrow, and so I think it would

still be in new sorrows. I can do all things, Christ strengthening me — all things but being good. I have sometimes thought that that would have to be excepted as long as we wore these mortal bodies; but I can do all things, so far as they are done at all, through Christ, who strengthens me.

And so I have talked with you by the way. I have conversed with you in respect to Christ. It seemed right that I should say these few words—that I should make this profession of my faith.

Earlier in my ministry I preached more about Christ than later in my ministry; and it may seem to some as if I had perhaps changed my mind, or had had some different experience. Therefore I want, as this may be the last lecture that I shall ever speak to you, to say that Christ has been to me every thing. Every letter in the whole alphabet of religion, so far as I have read, has been Christ. Whatever other things I may have seemed to spell, the root has always been the offspring of David.

And my desire for you could be comprehended in the same general range. It is that you may know Christ, and the power of his resurrection; that you may experience communion with him, and feel the joy of his soul; that he may become to you a presence and a companion; that you may love him, and be consciously loved by him; that you may rest in him in your sorrow; that you may trust in him in your fear and in your hours of anguish. My desire is that in all the wondrous lore of earthly experience you may have a Christ with you — a Christ whose hands were pierced to teach you duties that are so hard as to pierce and rend you; a Christ whose very heart was lacerated to teach you to take the spear-point. Yes, whatever may befall you, my desire is for you, Christ; for your children, Christ; for your own life here, Christ; and for that better life, which we can not call dying, Christ.

And now, my dear people, if I should attempt to say to you what I feel, I should be swept away as with the tide of

the whole ocean. I can only say that with all my heart I have loved my work here, and that as much as any man ever loved a church on earth, I have loved this church. It is my pride (I hope not an unchastened one); it is my joy; and if I have an earthly ambition, it is more than satisfied in feeling that my name is indissolubly bound with your name in this Plymouth Church, and that we have had a history, so far, that has been a history of striving for the right, for purity, for truth, for honor, for love, and for duty toward man and toward God. And I have been paid a thousandfold by your sympathy and by your help. I have never had any complaints to make. You have more than met my needs in support. You have always, in confidence and in affection, done more than I had a right to ask. You have been very tolerant of my faults. You have forborne to a degree that has made me admire your delicacy and your kindness; and even the momentary and fitful censures or criticisms in which you have indulged have been like those little gusty flaws that one sees on a summer day, flying and scudding across the face of the water, that only make it more beautiful when it is tranquil. My life here as the pastor of this church has been such as I can scarcely conceive to be surpassed in all the elements that belong to this mortal state; and I am very happy in the present, and very happy in the retrospect. I can not thank you, but I can thank him who put it into your hearts to do by me as you have done.

Now, when one or two more days are gone, we shall simply not see each other. We shall not be separated. Thoughts know no separation. Hearts are inseparable. It is but the flesh that separates. The mind is larger than the world that it inhabits; and though a thousand leagues divide, it takes but just as long to send a thought, or a throb of heart-love back across the ocean, as it does for a mother to send a thought or a throb of heart-love from the couch where she lies to the cradle where her child is. There are no distances in loving, and thinking, and feeling.

And in going, I go *with* you, and not *from* you. I shall still see your upturned faces in this room. On Friday night I shall see you assembled here. On Wednesday night and on the Sabbath I shall hear the old Plymouth bell ring. All the Sundays that I shall see will be Plymouth Sundays. Going and returning, I shall bear you as a part of my own life; for I love you; and I hope to labor with you yet more upon earth. I know that I shall stand with you in heaven, and that forever you and I will, in that more glorious land, without twilight or gathering darkness, talk together of the wondrous nature and the blessed work of Christ. It will be Christ there, as it has been here. And my last words to you of discourse and of lecture are simply these: Christ in you, and Christ in me, the hope of glory.

PRAYER.*

Thou adorable God, thou hast taught us to love thee as well as to fear thee, and out of our own experience thou hast developed praise and thanksgiving. It is no longer because we are commanded that we worship thee, but because we need thee and desire thee. Our souls cry out for the living God. We turn away from every source of human power, from every fountain of enjoyment in this world. Conscious how imperfect and perishing are the best earthly things, we turn to thee, the unchangeable, the glorious, the perfect among ten thousand and altogether lovely, and are filled with wonder as the vision of thy glory rests upon us. That such a one as thou art shouldst deign to call us brethren; that thou shouldst stoop in thy thoughts even to our condition; that thou shouldst lay aside thy glory, and descend through all the space that is between thee and us to assume our nature, and to walk in human life, bearing its trials, having accumulated upon thee experiences beyond any that ever fell upon mortal man, and suffering untold anguish in death that thou mightest raise us with thy reacting life to immortality and glory—how for all this shall we express our wonder, our gladness, our gratitude? O Lord Jesus, we bow

* Plymouth Church, Sabbath evening, May 24, 1863—the last Sabbath before Mr. Beecher's departure to Europe.

down in humility before thee; and yet we are lifted up to gaze upon thy face, and to rejoice in thee, even when most we are conscious of our demerit. This is the work of thy grace. Thou hast wrought this sacred confidence in our heart by the Holy Spirit; and thou art every day teaching us more and more the spirit of children; and spontaneously our thoughts begin to call out thy sacred name; and in the seclusion of our meditation, in the silence of the night, in our experience day by day, in the affairs of life, still we feel our hearts yearning after thee. Thou art our Father, and we are thy children. We know we are the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be. The full meaning, the glorious perfection — these we do not understand. We are yet hidden from the glory that is to be revealed, but we believe that it will transcend all imagination. None can know what thou hast reserved for them that love thee. Be pleased, Almighty God, to guide us so long as we live in the way of duty, fulfilling thy will. And grant that we may never be weary of thy work—not even when its consummation is delayed. May we rejoice to spend and be spent in the service of our Master.

We beseech of thee that we may not withdraw ourselves from laboring in thy cause on earth in the times in which we live. May we follow Jesus, that was an outcast from among his own people. May we come unto him without the camp, who was sent forth from it to bear the sins and the disgrace of the people. May we not be ashamed of thy cross. May we not be ashamed of thy shame. May we suffer with thee upon earth, with the hope of reigning with thee in heaven. May we endure hardness as good soldiers, not counting our lives dear to us. Grant, we pray thee, that to the very end we may be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

We thank thee for all the way in which thou hast led this Church. We remember the day when it was gathered, and the days of its feebleness. We remember the periods of its striving and labor. But who can remember the greatness of the way through which thou hast led it? Thou hast made it impossible to gather and carry in our thought the multitude of thy mercies to us. We thank thee, O God, for the munificence of thy spiritual gifts. So many have been born into spiritual life here; so many have here been built up in the strength of life; so many have been perfected in our midst in their earthly work, and gone singing home to glory,

that this place has become memorable to thousands of souls. Thou hast consecrated this Church in the memories of those who are gathered together here. We rejoice that thou hast made this Church seem to us a part of the Church above, and that we have invested there our hearts, sending forward those that are dear, until now we have there brothers, and sisters, and parents, and children, and friends, the great company of whom is still augmenting.

Blessed be thy name, O God, that thou hast caused the light of truth to shine here clearly; that thou hast ordained it to be in power among us; and that thou hast permitted this people to be witnesses and laborers for God.

And now we pray that thou wilt take it into thy holy care and keeping. We pray that thou wilt be pleased to watch over this Church, and thy servant, its pastor; and in their temporary separation, wilt thou both keep those that remain and those that go; and grant that by rest thy servant may be prepared to return and work for God more faithfully, more spiritually, and more fruitfully than in years that have gone by.

We commend thy cause to thine own hand. Our wish is that thy name may be glorified. We scarcely care to ask for this or that fate. We are content to leave all things in thy hand. Behold thy work! Behold thy servants in the vineyard! What wilt thou have us to do? To do thy will is our wish, whether it be living or dying. We ask not then —for we scarcely care to ask—that our life may be spared. Our desire rather is that, living or dying, we may be the Lord's, and that this thy work may be carried forward; if by our hands, with more fidelity; if not by our hands, then by those that shall better serve the cause of the Master.

We pray that thou wilt look upon our land. Raise up more and more power to cleanse this nation, and intone the conscience of the people to establish righteousness as the stability of our time. Turn men back from oppression. Make them heartily sick of their wickedness. We beseech of thee that thou wilt tempest them until they shall take refuge beneath the shadow of the Almighty's wings, and stand there secure upon eternal justice.

Look upon all the nations of the earth. Bring war until they shall learn peace. Bring revolutions until revolutions shall have brought justice. Bring fear, and surprise, and terror, until they shall have wrought out the security of liberty and intelligence. And grant, O thou Husbandman of Time, that the furrows may be turned by thy strong and

swift-running plow; overturn and root up every thing that is in the way; and bring at last a glorious husbandry of precious seed, a hundredfold, in all the earth, of truth, justice, liberty, and piety. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

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